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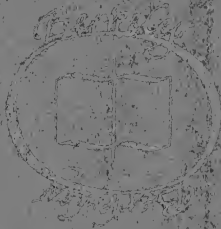
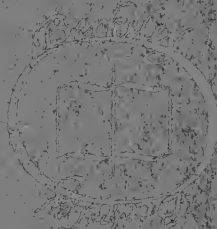
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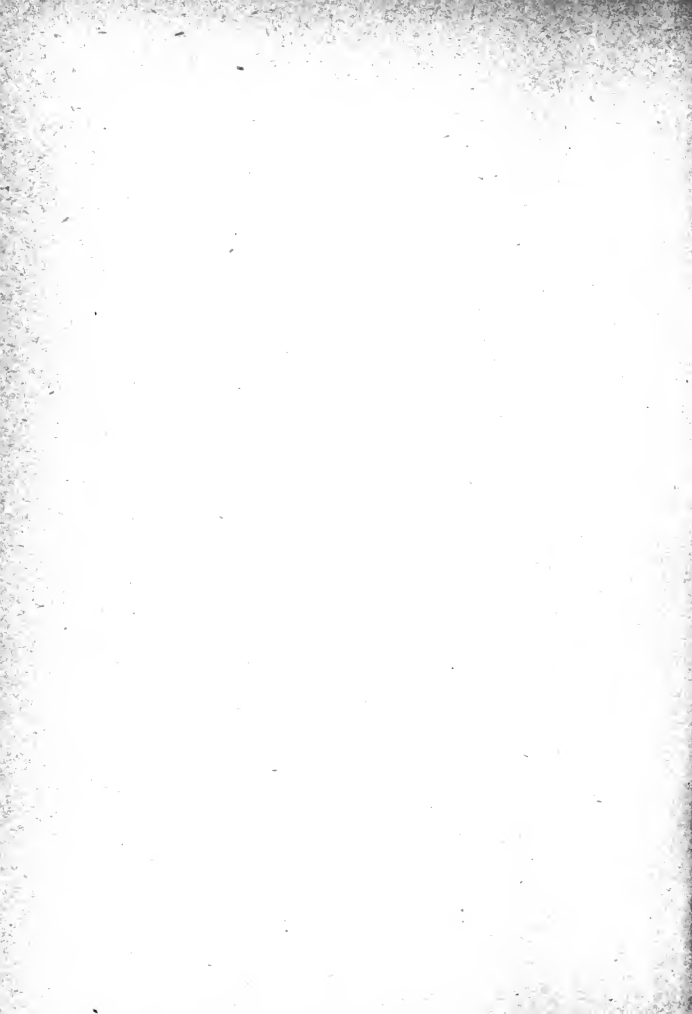




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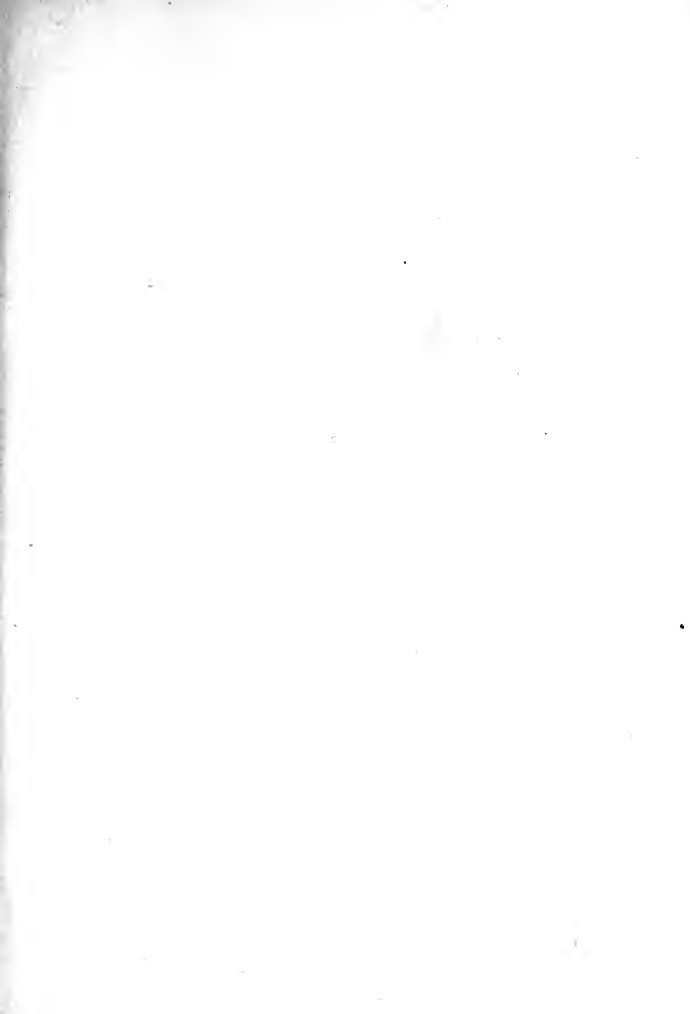


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Very sincerely yours  
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THE  
POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
JEAN INGELow. 1873-77



BOSTON:  
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1873.

AUTHOR'S EDITION.



CAMBRIDGE:  
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Dedication.



TO

GEORGE K. INGELOW.

YOUR LOVING SISTER

OFFERS YOU THESE POEMS, PARTLY AS

AN EXPRESSION OF HER AFFECTION, PARTLY FOR THE

PLEASURE OF CONNECTING HER EFFORT

WITH YOUR NAME.

*Kensington, June, 1863.*

235909



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# P O E M S.

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## DIVIDED.

### I.

An empty sky, a world of heather,  
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom;  
We two among them wading together,  
Shaking out honey, treading perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover,  
Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet,  
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,  
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

Flusheth the rise with her purple favor,  
Gloweth the cleft with her golden ring,  
'Twixt the two brown butterflies waver,  
Lightly settle, and sleepily swing.

We two walk till the purple dieth  
And short dry grass under foot is brown,  
But one little streak at a distance lieth  
Green like a ribbon to prank the down.

### II.

Over the grass we stepped unto it,  
And God He knoweth how blithe we were!  
Never a voice to bid us eschew it:  
Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair!

Hey the green ribbon! we kneeled beside it,  
We parted the grasses dewy and sheen;  
Drop over drop there filtered and slid  
A tiny bright beck that trickled between.

Tinkle, tinkle, sweetly it sung to us,  
Light was our talk as of faëry bells—  
Faëry wedding-bells faintly rung to us  
Down in their fortunate parallels.

Hand in hand, while the sun peered over,  
We lapped the grass on that youngling spring;  
Swept back its rushes, smoothed its clover,  
And said, "Let us follow it westering."

### III.

A dappled sky, a world of meadows,  
Circling above us the black rooks fly  
Forward, backward; lo, their dark shadows  
Flit on the blossoming tapestry—

Flit on the beck, for her long grass parteth  
As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown back;  
And, lo, the sun like a lover darteth  
His flattering smile on her wayward track.

Sing on! we sing in the glorious  
weather

Till one steps over the tiny strand,  
So narrow, in sooth, that still together  
On either brink we go hand in hand.

The beck grows wider, the hands must  
sever.

On either margin, our songs all done,  
We move apart, while she singeth ever,  
Taking the course of the stooping  
sun.

He prays, "Come over" — I may not  
follow;

I cry, "Return" — but he cannot  
come:

We speak, we laugh, but with voices  
hollow;

Our hands are hanging, our hearts  
are numb.

#### IV.

A breathing sigh, a sigh for answer,  
A little talking of outward things:  
The careless beck is a merry dancer,  
Keeping sweet time to the air she  
sings.

A little pain when the beck grows  
wider;

"Cross to me now — for her wavelets  
swell:"

"I may not cross" — and the voice  
beside her

Faintly reacheth, though heeded well.

No backward path; ah! no returning;

No second crossing that ripple's flow:

"Come to me now, for the west is  
burning;

Come ere it darkens;" — "Ah, no!  
ah, no!"

Then cries of pain, and arms out-  
reaching —

The beck grows wider and swift and  
deep:

Passionate words as of one beseech-  
ing —

The loud beck drowns them; we  
walk, and weep.

#### V.

A yellow moon in splendor drooping,  
A tired queen with her state oppressed,  
Low by rushes and swordgrass stoop-  
ing,

Lies she soft on the waves at rest.

The desert heavens have felt her sad-  
ness;

Her earth will weep her some dewy  
tears;

The wild beck ends her tune of glad-  
ness,

And goeth stilly as soul that fears.

We two walk on in our grassy places

On either marge of the moonlit flood,  
With the moon's own sadness in our  
faces,

Where joy is withered, blossom and  
bud.

#### VI.

A shady freshness, chafers whirring,

A little piping of leaf-hid birds;

A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring,

A cloud to the eastward snowy as  
curds.

Bare glassy slopes, where kids are  
tethered;

Round valleys like nests all ferny-  
lined;

Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops  
feathered,

Swell high in their freckled robes  
behind.

A rose-flush tender, a thrill, a quiver,

When golden gleams to the tree-tops  
glide;

A flashing edge for the milk-white river,  
The beck, a river — with still sleek  
tide.

Broad and white, and polished as silver,

On she goes under fruit-laden trees;

Sunk in leafage cooeth the culver,

And 'plaineth of love's disloyalties.

Glitters the dew and shines the river,

Up comes the lily and dries her bell;

But two are walking apart for ever,

And wave their hands for a mute  
farewell.

## VII.

A braver swell, a swifter sliding;  
The river hasteth, her banks recede:  
Wing-like sails on her bosom gliding  
Bear down the lily and drown the reed.

Stately prows are rising and bowing  
(Shouts of mariners winnow the air),  
And level sands for banks endowing  
The tiny green ribbon that showed so fair.

While, O my heart! as white sails shiver,  
And crowds are passing, and banks stretch wide,  
How hard to follow, with lips that quiver,  
That moving speck on the far-off side!

Farther, farther—I see it—know it—  
My eyes brim over, it melts away:  
Only my heart to my heart shall show it  
As I walk desolate day by day.

## VIII.

And yet I know past all doubting,  
truly—  
A knowledge greater than grief can dim—  
I know, as he loved, he will love me duly—  
Yea, better—e'en better than I love him.

And as I walk by the vast calm river,  
The awful river so dread to see,  
I say, "Thy breadth and thy depth for ever  
Are bridged by his thoughts that cross to me."

## HONORS.—PART I.

*A Scholar is musing on his Want of Success.*

*To strive—and fail. Yes, I did strive and fail,  
I set mine eyes upon a certain night  
To find a certain star—and could not hail  
With them its deep-set light.*

*Fool that I was! I will rehearse my fault:  
I, wingless, thought myself on high to lift  
Among the winged—I set these feet that halt  
To run against the swift.*

*And yet this man, that loved me so, can write—  
That loves me, I would say, can let me see;  
Or fain would have me think he counts but light  
These Honors lost to me.*

## [The Letter of his Friend.]

"What are they? that old house of yours which gave  
Such welcomes oft to me, the sunbeams fall  
Still down the squares of blue and white which pave  
Its hospitable hall.

"A brave old house! a garden full of bees,  
Large dropping poppies, and queen hollyhocks,  
With butterflies for crowns—tree peonies  
And pinks and goldilocks.

"Go, when the shadow of your house is long  
Upon the garden—when some new-waked bird,  
Pecking and fluttering, chirps a sudden song,  
And not a leaf is stirred;

"But every one drops dew from either edge  
Upon its fellow, while an amber ray  
Slants up among the tree-tops like a wedge  
Of liquid gold—to play

"Over and under them, and so to fall  
Upon that lane of water lying below—  
That piece of sky let in, that you do call  
A pond, but which I know

"To be a deep and wondrous world ;  
for I

Have seen the trees within it — mar-  
vellous things :

So thick no bird betwixt their leaves  
could fly

But she would smite her wings ; —

"Go there, I say ; stand at the water's  
brink,

And shoals of spotted grayling you  
shall see

Basking between the shadows — look,  
and think

'This beauty is for me ;

"For me this freshness in the morn-  
ing hours ;

For me the water's clear tranquil-  
lity ;

For me that soft descent of chestnut  
flowers ;

The cushat's cry for me.

"The lovely laughter of the wind-  
swayed wheat ;

The easy slope of yonder pastoral  
hill ;

The sedgy brook whereby the red kine  
meet

And wade and drink their fill.'

"Then saunter down that terrace  
whence the sea

All fair with wing-like sails you may  
discern ;

Be glad, and say 'This beauty is for  
me —

A thing to love and learn.

"For me the bounding in of tides ;  
for me

The laying bare of sands when they  
retreat ;

The purple flush of calms, the spark-  
ling glee

When waves and sunshine meet.'

"So, after gazing, homeward turn, and  
mount

To that long chamber in the roof ;  
there tell

Your heart the laid-up lore it holds to  
count

And prize and ponder well.

"The lookings onward of the race  
before

It had a past to make it look behind ;  
Its reverent wonders, and its doubtings

sore,  
Its adorations blind.

"The thunder of its war-songs, and  
the glow

Of chants to freedom by the old  
world sung ;

The sweet love cadences that long ago  
Dropped from the old world  
tongue.

"And then this new-world lore that  
takes account

Of tangled star-dust ; maps the triple  
whirl

Of blue and red and argent worlds that  
mount

And greet the IRISH EARL ;

"Or float across the tube that HER-  
SCHEL sways,

Like pale-rose chaplets, or like sap-  
phire mist ;

Or hang or droop along the heavenly  
ways,

Like scarfs of amethyst.

"O strange it is and wide the new-  
world lore,

For next it treateth of our native  
dust !

Must dig out buried monsters, and  
explore

The green earth's fruitful crust ;

"Must write the story of her seething  
youth —

How lizards paddled in her luke-  
warm seas ;

Must show the cones she ripened, and  
forsooth

Count seasons on her trees ;

"Must know her weight, and pry into  
her age,

Count her old beach lines by their  
tidal swell ;

Her sunken mountains name, her craters gauge,  
Her cold volcanoes tell;

"And treat her as a ball, that one might pass  
From this hand to the other—such a ball  
As he could measure with a blade of grass,  
And say it was but small!

"Honors! O friend, I pray you bear with me:  
The grass hath time to grow in meadow lands,  
And leisurely the opal murmuring sea  
Breaks on her yellow sands;

"And leisurely the ring-dove on her nest  
Broods till her tender chick will peck the shell;  
And leisurely down fall from ferny crest  
The dew-drops on the well;

"And leisurely your life and spirit grew,  
With yet the time to grow and ripen free:  
No judgment past withdraws that boon from you,  
Nor granteth it to me.

"Still must I plod, and still in cities moil;  
From precious leisure, learned leisure far,  
Dull my best self with handling common soil;  
Yet mine those honors are.

"Mine they are called; they are a name which means,  
'This man had steady pulses, tranquil nerves;  
Here, as in other fields, the most he gleans  
Who works and never swerves.

"We measure not his mind; we cannot tell

What lieth under, over, or beside  
The test we put him to; he doth excel,  
We know, where he is tried;

"But, if he boast some further excellence—  
Mind to create as well as to attain;  
To sway his peers by golden eloquence,  
As wind doth shift a fane;

"To sing among the poets—we are nought:  
We cannot drop a line into that sea  
And read its fathoms off, nor gauge a thought,  
Nor map a simile.

"It may be of all voices sublunar  
The only one he echoes we did try;  
We may have come upon the only star  
That twinkles in his sky.'

"And so it was with me."  
*O false my friend!  
False, false, a random charge, a  
blame undue;  
Wrest not fair reasoning to a crooked  
end:  
False, false, as you are true!*

But I read on: "And so it was with me;  
Your golden constellations lying apart  
They neither hailed nor greeted heartily,  
Nor noted on their chart.

"And yet to you and not to me belong  
Those finer instincts that, like second sight  
And hearing, catch creation's under-song,  
And see by inner light.

"You are a well, whereon I, gazing, see  
Reflections of the upper heavens—a well  
From whence come deep, deep echoes up to me—  
Some underwave's low swell.

"I cannot soar into the heights you  
show,  
Nor dive among the deeps that you  
reveal;  
But it is much that high things ARE to  
know,  
That deep things ARE to feel.

"'Tis yours, not mine, to pluck out of  
your breast  
Some human truth, whose workings  
recondite  
Were unattired in words, and mani-  
fest  
And hold it forth to light,

"And cry, 'Behold this thing that I  
have found.'  
And though they knew not of it till  
that day,  
Nor should have done with no man to  
expound  
Its meaning, yet they say,

"We do accept it: lower than the  
shoals  
We skim, this diver went, nor did  
create,  
But find it for us deeper in our souls  
Than we can penetrate.'

"You were to me the world's inter-  
preter,  
The man that taught me Nature's  
unknown tongue,  
And to the notes of her wild dulcimer  
First set sweet words and sung.

"And what am I to you? A steady  
hand  
To hold, a steadfast heart to trust  
withal;  
Merely a man that loves you, and will  
stand  
By you, whate'er befall.

"But need we praise his tendance  
tutelar  
Who feeds a flame that warms him?  
Yet 'tis true  
I love you for the sake of what you are,  
And not of what you do: —

"As heaven's high twins, whereof in  
Tyrian blue  
The one revolveth; through his  
course immense  
Might love his fellow of the damask  
hue,  
For like, and difference.

"For different pathways ever more  
decreed  
To intersect, but not to interfere;  
For common goal, two aspects, and  
one speed,  
One centre and one year;

"For deep affinities, for drawings  
strong,  
That by their nature each must needs  
exert;  
For loved alliance, and for union long,  
That stands before desert.

"And yet desert makes brighter not  
the less,  
For nearest his own star he shall not  
fail  
To think those rays unmatched for  
nobleness,  
That distance counts but pale.

"Be pale afar, since still to me you  
shine,  
And must while Nature's eldest law  
shall hold;" —  
*Ah, there's the thought which makes  
his random line  
Dear as refined gold!*

*Then shall I drink this draught of  
oxymel,  
Part sweet, part sharp? Myself  
d'erprized to know  
Is sharp; the cause is sweet, and  
truth to tell  
Few would that cause forego,*

*Which is, that this of all the men on  
earth  
Doth love me well enough to count  
me great —  
To think my soul and his of equal  
girth —  
O liberal estimate!*

*And yet it is so ; he is bound to me,  
For human love makes aliens near  
of kin ;  
By it I rise, there is equality :  
I rise to thee, my twin.*

*"Take courage" — courage ! ay, my  
purple peer,  
I will take courage ; for thy Tyrian  
rays  
Refresh me to the heart, and strangely  
dear  
And healing is thy praise.*

*"Take courage," quoth he, "and re-  
spect the mind  
Your Maker gave, for good your fate  
fulfil ;  
The fate round many hearts your own  
to wind."  
Twin soul, I will ! I will !*

---

## HONORS. — PART II.

### *The Answer.*

As one who, journeying, checks the  
rein in haste  
Because a chasm doth yawn across  
his way  
Too wide for leaping, and too steeply  
faced  
For climber to essay —

As such an one, being brought to sud-  
den stand,  
Doubts all his foregone path if 'twere  
the true,  
And turns to this and then to the other  
hand  
As knowing not what to do, —

So I, being checked, am with my path  
at strife  
Which led to such a chasm, and there  
doth end.  
False path ! it cost me priceless years  
of life,  
My well-beloved friend.

There fell a flute when Ganymede went  
up —  
The flute that he was wont to play  
upon :  
It dropped beside the jonquil's milk-  
white cup,  
And freckled cowlslips wan —

Dropped from his heedless hand when,  
dazed and mute,  
He sailed upon the eagle's quivering  
wing,  
Aspiring, panting — ay, it dropped —  
the flute  
Erewhile a cherished thing.

Among the delicate grasses and the  
bells  
Of crocuses that spotted a rill side,  
I picked up such a flute, and its clear  
swells  
To my young lips replied.

I played thereon, and its response was  
sweet ;  
But, lo, they took from me that sol-  
acing reed.  
"O shame !" they said ; "such music  
is not meet ;  
Go up like Ganymede.

"Go up, despise these humble grassy  
things,  
Sit on the golden edge of yonder  
cloud."  
Alas ! though ne'er for me those eagle  
wings  
Stooped from their eyrie proud.

My flute ! and flung away its echoes  
sleep ;  
But as for me, my life-pulse beateth  
low ;  
And like a last-year's leaf enshrouded  
deep  
Under the drifting snow,

Or like some vessel wrecked upon the  
sand  
Of torrid swamps, with all her mer-  
chandise,  
And left to rot betwixt the sea and land,  
My helpless spirit lies.

Ruing, I think for what then was I  
made;

What end appointed for — what use  
designed?

Now let me right this heart that was  
bewrayed—

Unveil these eyes gone blind.

My well-beloved friend, at noon to-day  
Over our cliffs a white mist lay un-  
furled,

So thick, one standing on their brink  
might say,

Lo, here doth end the world.

A white abyss beneath, and nought be-  
side;

Yet, hark! a cropping sound not ten  
feet down:

Soon I could trace some browsing lambs  
that hied

Through rock-paths cleft and  
brown.

And here and there green tufts of grass  
peered through,

Salt lavender, and sea thrift; then  
behold,

The mist, subsiding ever, bared to view  
A beast of giant mould.

She seemed a great sea monster lying  
content

With all her cubs about her: but  
deep—deep—

The subtle mist went floating; its de-  
scent

Showed the world's end was steep.

It shook, it melted, shaking more, till,  
lo,

The sprawling monster was a rock;  
her brood

Were boulders, whereon seamews white  
as snow

Sat watching for their food.

Then once again it sank, its day was  
done:

Part rolled away, part vanished ut-  
terly,

And glimmering softly under the white  
sun,

Behold! a great white sea.

O that the mist which veileth my To-  
come

Would so dissolve and yield unto  
mine eyes

A worthy path! I'd count not wear-  
some

Long toil, nor enterprise,

But strain to reach it; ay, with wrest-  
lings stout

And hopes that even in the dark will  
grow

(Like plants in dungeons, reaching  
feelers out),

And ploddings wary and slow.

Is there such path already made to fit  
The measure of my foot? It shall  
atone

For much, if I at length may light on it  
And know it for mine own.

But is there none? why, then 'tis more  
than well:

And glad at heart myself will hew  
one out,

Let me be only sure; for, sooth to tell,  
The sorest dole is doubt—

Doubt, a blank twilight of the heart,  
which mars

All sweetest colors in its dimness  
same;

A soul-mist, through whose rifts famil-  
iar stars

Beholding, we misname.

A ripple on the inner sea, which shakes  
Those images that on its breast re-  
posed;

A fold upon the wind-swayed flag, that  
breaks

The motto it disclosed.

O doubt! O doubt! I know my destiny;  
I feel thee fluttering bird-like in my  
breast;

I cannot loose, but I will sing to thee,  
And flatter thee to rest.

There is no certainty, "my bosom's  
guest,"

No proving for the things whereof  
ye wot;



For, like the dead to sight unmanifest,  
They are, and they are not.

But surely as they are, for God is truth,  
And as they are not, for we saw them  
die,  
So surely from the heaven drops light  
for youth,  
If youth will walk thereby.

And can I see this light? It may be  
so;  
"But see it thus and thus," my  
fathers said.  
The living do not rule this world; ah,  
no!  
It is the dead, the dead.

Shall I be slave to every noble soul,  
Study the dead, and to their spirits  
bend;  
Or learn to read my own heart's folded  
scroll,  
And make self-rule my end?

Thought from *without* — O shall I take  
on trust,  
And life from others modelled steal  
or win;  
Or shall I heave to light, and clear of  
rust  
My true life from *within*.

O, let me be myself! But where, O  
where,  
Under this heap of precedent, this  
mound  
Of customs, modes, and maxims, cum-  
brance rare,  
Shall the *Myself* be found?

O thou *Myself*, thy fathers thee de-  
barred  
None of their wisdom, but their folly  
came  
Therewith; they smoothed thy path, but  
made it hard  
For thee to quit the same.

With glosses they obscured God's nat-  
ural truth,  
And with tradition tarnished His re-  
vealed;

With vain protections they endangered  
youth,  
With layings bare they sealed.

What aileth thee, myself? Alas! thy  
hands  
Are tired with old opinions — heir  
and son,  
Thou hast inherited thy father's lands  
And all his debts thereon.

O that some power would give me  
Adam's eyes!  
O for the straight simplicity of Eve!  
For I see nought, or grow, poor fool,  
too wise  
With seeing to believe.

Exemplars may be heaped until they  
hide  
The rules that they were made to  
render plain;  
Love may be watched, her nature to  
decide,  
Until love's self doth wane.

Ah me! and when forgotten and fore-  
gone  
We leave the learning of departed  
days,  
And cease the generations past to con,  
Their wisdom and their ways —

When fain to learn we lean into the  
dark,  
And grope to feel the floor of the  
abyss,  
Or find the secret boundary lines which  
mark  
Where soul and matter kiss —

Fair world! these puzzled souls of ours  
grow weak  
With beating their bruised wings  
against the rim  
That bounds their utmost flying, when  
they seek  
The distant and the dim.

We pant, we strain like birds against  
their wires;  
Are sick to reach the vast and the  
beyond; —

And what avails, if still to our desires  
Those far-off gulfs respond?

Contentment comes not therefore; still  
there lies  
An outer distance when the first is  
hailed,  
And still for ever yawns before our eyes  
An **UTMOST**—that is veiled.

Searching those edges of the universe,  
We leave the central fields a fallow  
part;  
To feed the eye more precious things  
amerge,  
And starve the darkened heart.

Then all goes wrong: the old founda-  
tions rock,  
One scorns at him of old who gazed  
unshod;  
One striking with a pickaxe thinks the  
shock  
Shall move the seat of God.

A little way, a very little way  
(Life is so short), they dig into the  
rind,  
And they are very sorry, so they say,—  
Sorry for what they find.

But truth is sacred—ay, and must be  
told:  
There is a story long beloved of  
man;  
We must forego it, for it will not hold—  
Nature had no such plan.

And then, "if God hath said it," some  
should cry,  
"We have the story from the foun-  
tain head:"  
Why, then, what better than the old  
reply,  
The first "Yea, **HATH** God said?"

The garden, O the garden, must it go,  
Source of our hope and our most  
dear regret?  
The ancient story, must it no more show  
How men may win it yet?

And all upon the Titan child's decree,  
The baby science, born but yesterday,

That in its rash unlearned infancy  
With shells and stones at play,

And delving in the outworks of this  
world,  
And little crevices that it could reach,  
Discovered certain bones laid up, and  
furled  
Under an ancient beach,

And other waifs that lay to its young  
mind  
Some fathoms lower than they ought  
to lie,  
By gain whereof it could not fail to find  
Much proof of ancients,

Hints at a pedigree withdrawn and vast,  
Terrible deeps, and old obscurities,  
Or soulless origin, and twilight passed  
In the primeval seas,

Whereof it tells, as thinking it hath  
been  
Of truth not meant for man inheri-  
tor;  
As if this knowledge Heaven had ne'er  
foreseen  
And not provided for!

Knowledge ordained to live! although  
the fate  
Of much that went before it was—to  
die,  
And be called ignorance by such as  
wait  
Till the next drift comes by.

O marvellous credulity of man!  
If God indeed kept secret, couldst  
thou know  
Or follow up the mighty Artisan  
Unless He willed it so?

And canst thou of the Maker think in  
sooth  
That of the Made He shall be found  
at fault,  
And dream of wresting from Him hid-  
den truth  
By force or by assault?

But if he keeps not secret—if thine  
eyes

He openeth to His wondrous work  
of late—

Think how in soberness thy wisdom lies,  
And have the grace to wait.

Wait, nor against the half-learned les-  
son fret,

Nor chide at old belief as if it erred,  
Because thou canst not reconcile as yet  
The Worker and the word.

Either the Worker did in ancient days  
Give us the word, His tale of love  
and might;

(And if in truth He gave it us, who says  
He did not give it right?)

Or else He gave it not, and then indeed  
We know not if He is—by whom  
our years

Are portioned, who the orphan moons  
doth lead,  
And the unfathered spheres.

We sit unowned upon our burial sod,  
And know not whence we come or  
whose we be,

Comfortless mourners for the mount of  
God,  
The rocks of Calvary:

Bereft of heaven, and of the long-loved  
page

Wrought us by some who thought  
with death to cope;

Despairing comforters, from age to age  
Sowing the seeds of hope:

Gracious deceivers, who have lifted us  
Out of the slough where passed our  
unknown youth;

Beneficent liars, who have gifted us  
With sacred love of truth!

Farewell to them: yet pause ere thou  
unmoor

And set thine ark adrift on unknown  
seas;

How wert thou bettered so, or more  
secure

Thou, and thy destinies!

And if thou searchest, and art made to  
fear

Facing of unread riddles dark and  
hard,

And mastering not their majesty austere,  
Their meaning locked and barred:

How would it make the weight and  
wonder less,

If, lifted from immortal shoulders  
down,

The worlds were cast on seas of empti-  
ness

In realms without a crown,

And (if there were no God) were left  
to rue

Dominion of the air and of the fire?

Then if there be a God, "Let God be  
true,

And every man a liar."

But as for me, I do not speak as one

That is exempt: I am with life at  
feud:

My heart reproacheth me, as there were  
none

Of so small gratitude;

Wherewith shall I console thee, heart  
o' mine,

And still thy yearning and resolve  
thy doubt?

That which I know, and that which I  
divine,

Alas! have left thee out.

I have aspired to know the might of  
God,

As if the story of His love was  
furled,

Nor sacred foot the grasses e'er had  
trod

Of this redeemed world:—

Have sunk my thoughts as lead into  
the deep,

To grope for that abyss whence evil  
grew,

And spirits of ill, with eyes that cannot  
weep,

Hungry and desolate flew;

As if their legions did not one day  
crowd

The death-pangs of the Conquering  
Good to see!

As if a sacred head had never bowed  
In death for man—for me;

Nor ransomed back the souls beloved,  
the sons

Of men, from thralldom with the  
nether kings

In that dark country where those evil  
ones

Trail their unhallowed wings.

And didst Thou love the race that  
loved not Thee,

And didst Thou take to heaven a  
human brow?

Dost plead with man's voice by the  
marvellous sea?

Art Thou his kinsman now?

O God, O kinsman loved, but not  
enough!

O man, with eyes majestic after  
death,

Whose feet have toiled along our path-  
ways rough,

Whose lips drawn human breath!

By that one likeness which is ours and  
Thine,

By that one nature which doth hold  
us kin,

By that high heaven where, sinless,  
Thou dost shine

To draw us sinners in,

By Thy last silence in the judgment-  
hall,

By long foreknowledge of the deadly  
tree,

By darkness, by the wormwood and the  
gall,

I pray Thee visit me.

Come, lest this heart should, cold and  
cast away,

Die ere the guest adored she enter-  
tain—

Lest eyes which never saw Thine  
earthly day

Should miss Thy heavenly reign.

Come weary-eyed from seeking in the  
night

Thy wanderers strayed upon the  
pathless wold,

Who wounded, dying, cry to Thee for  
light,

And cannot find their fold.

And deign, O Watcher, with the sleep-  
less brow,

Pathetic in its yearning—deign re-  
ply;

Is there, O is there aught that such as  
Thou

Wouldst take from such as I?

Are there no briars across Thy pathway  
thrust?

Are there no thorns that compass it  
about?

Nor any stones that Thou wilt deign  
to trust

My hands to gather out?

O, if thou wilt, and if such bliss might  
be,

It were a cure for doubt, regret, de-  
lay—

Let my lost pathway go—what aileth  
me?—

There is a better way.

What though unmarked the happy  
workman toil,

And break unthanked of man the  
stubborn clod?

It is enough, for sacred is the soil,

Dear are the hills of God.

Far better in its place the lowliest bird  
Should sing aright to Him the low-  
liest song,

Than that a seraph strayed should take  
the word

And sing His glory wrong.

Friend, it is time to work. I say to  
thee,

Thou dost all earthly good by much  
excel;

Thou and God's blessing are enough  
for me:

My work, my work—farewell!

REQUIESCAT IN PACE!

O my heart, my heart is sick awishing and awaiting:

The lad took up his knapsack, he went, he went his way;  
And I looked on for his coming, as a prisoner through the grating  
Looks and longs and longs and wishes for its opening day.

On the wild purple mountains, all alone with no other,  
The strong terrible mountains, he longed, he longed to be;  
And he stooped to kiss his father, and he stooped to kiss his mother,  
And till I said "Adieu, sweet Sir," he quite forgot me.

He wrote of their white raiment, the ghostly capes that screen them,  
Of the storm winds that beat them, their thunder-rents and scars,  
And the paradise of purple, and the golden slopes between them,  
And fields, where grow God's gentian bells, and His crocus stars.

He wrote of frail gauzy clouds, that drop on them like fleeces,  
And make green their fir forests, and feed their mosses hoar;  
Or come sailing up the valleys, and get wrecked and go to pieces,  
Like sloops against their cruel strength: then he wrote no more.

O the silence that came next, the patience and long aching!  
They never said so much as "He was a dear loved son;"  
Not the father to the mother moaned, that dreary stillness breaking:  
"Ah! wherefore did he leave us so — this, our only one?"

They sat within, as waiting, until the neighbors prayed them,  
At Cromer, by the sea-coast, 'twere peace and change to be;  
And to Cromer, in their patience, or that urgency affrayed them,  
Or because the tidings tarried, they came, and took me.

It was three months and over since the dear lad had started:  
On the green downs at Cromer I sat to see the view;  
On an open space of herbage, where the ling and fern had parted,  
Betwixt the tall white lighthouse towers, the old and the new.

Below me lay the wide sea, the scarlet sun was stooping,  
And he dyed the waste water, as with a scarlet dye;  
And he dyed the lighthouse towers; every bird with white wing swooping  
Took his colors, and the cliffs did, and the yawning sky.

Over grass came that strange flush, and over ling and heather,  
Over flocks of sheep and lambs, and over Cromer town;  
And each filmy cloudlet crossing drifted like a scarlet feather  
Torn from the folded wings of clouds, while he settled down.

When I looked, I dared not sigh: — In the light of God's splendor,  
With His daily blue and gold, who am I? what am I?  
But that passion and outpouring seemed an awful sign and tender,  
Like the blood of the Redeemer, shown on earth and sky.

O for comfort, O the waste of a long doubt and trouble!  
On that sultry August eve trouble had made me meek:  
I was tired of my sorrow — O so faint, for it was double  
In the weight of its oppression, that I could not speak!

*REQUIESCAT IN PACE!*

And a little comfort grew, while the dimmed eyes were feeding,  
And the dull ears with murmur of waters satisfied;  
But a dream came slowly nigh me, all my thoughts and fancy leading  
Across the bounds of waking life to the other side.

And I dreamt that I looked out, to the waste waters turning,  
And saw the flakes of scarlet from wave to wave tossed on;  
And the scarlet mix with azure, where a heap of gold lay burning  
On the clear remote sea reaches; for the sun was gone.

Then I thought a far-off shout dropped across the still water —  
A question as I took it, for soon an answer came  
From the tall white ruined lighthouse: "If it be the old man's daughter  
That we wot of," ran the answer, "what then — who's to blame?"

I looked up at the lighthouse all roofless and storm-broken:  
A great white bird sat on it, with neck stretched to sea;  
Unto somewhat which was sailing in a skiff the bird had spoken,  
And a trembling seized my spirit, for they talked of me.

I was the old man's daughter, the bird went on to name him;  
"He loved to count the starlings as he sat in the sun;  
Long ago he served with Nelson, and his story did not shame him:  
Ay, the old man was a good man — and his work was done."

The skiff was like a crescent, ghost of some moon departed,  
Frail, white, she rocked and curtsied as the red wave she crossed,  
And the thing within sat paddling, and the crescent dipped and darted,  
Flying on, again was shouting, but the words were lost.

I said, "That thing is hooded; I could hear but that floweth  
The great hood below its mouth:" then the bird made reply,  
"If they know not, more's the pity, for the little shrewmouse knoweth,  
And the kite knows, and the eagle, and the glead and pye."

And he stooped to whet his beak on the stones of the coping;  
And when once more the shout came, in querulous tones he spake,  
"What I said was 'more's the pity;' if the heart be long past hoping,  
Let it say of death, 'I know it,' or doubt on and break.

"Men must die — one dies by day, and near him moans his mother,  
They dig his grave, tread it down, and go from it full loth:  
And one dies about the midnight, and the wind moans, and no other,  
And the snows give him a burial — and God loves them both.

"The first hath no advantage — it shall not soothe his slumber  
That a lock of his brown hair his father aye shall keep;  
For the last, he nothing grudgeth, it shall nought his quiet cumber,  
That in a golden mesh of his callow eaglets sleep.

"Men must die when all is said, e'en the kite and glead know it,  
And the lad's father knew it, and the lad, the lad too;  
It was never kept a secret, waters bring it and winds blow it,  
And he met it on the mountain — why then make ado?"

With that he spread his white wings, and swept across the water,  
 Lit upon the hooded head, and it and all went down;  
 And they laughed as they went under, and I woke, "the old man's daughter,"  
 And looked across the slope of grass, and at Cromer town.

And I said, "Is that the sky, all gray and silver suited?"  
 And I thought, "Is that the sea that lies so white and wan?  
 I have dreamed as I remember: give me time — I was reputed  
 Once to have a steady courage — O, I fear 'tis gone!"

And I said, "Is this my heart? if it be, low 'tis beating,  
 So he lies on the mountain, hard by the eagles' brood;  
 I have had a dream this evening, while the white and gold were fleeting,  
 But I need not, need not tell it — where would be the good?"

"Where would be the good to them, his father and his mother?  
 For the ghost of their dead hope appeareth to them still.  
 While a lonely watch-fire smoulders, who its dying red would smother,  
 That gives what little light there is to a darksome hill?"

I rose up, I made no moan, I did not cry nor falter,  
 But slowly in the twilight I came to Cromer town.  
 What can wringing of the hands do that which is ordained to alter?  
 He had climbed, had climbed the mountain, he would ne'er come down.

But, O my first, O my best, I could not choose but love thee!  
 O, to be a wild white bird, and seek thy rocky bed!  
 From my breast I'd give thee burial, pluck the down and spread above thee;  
 I would sit and sing thy requiem on the mountain head.

Fare thee well, my love of loves! would I had died before thee!  
 O, to be at least a cloud, that near thee I might flow,  
 Solemnly approach the mountain, weep away my being o'er thee,  
 And veil thy breast with icicles, and thy brow with snow!

## SUPPER AT THE MILL.

*Mother.* Well, Frances.

*Frances.* Well, good mother, how are you?

*M.* I'm hearty, lass, but warm; the weather's warm:

I think 'tis mostly warm on market days.

I met with George behind the mill: said he,

"Mother, go in and rest awhile."

*F.* Ay, do,  
 And stay to supper; put your basket down.

*M.* Why, now, it is not heavy?

*F.* Willie, man,  
 Get up and kiss your Granny. Heavy,  
 no!

Some call good churning luck; but,  
 luck or skill,

Your butter mostly comes as firm and  
 sweet

As if 'twas Christmas. So you sold it  
 all?

*M.* All but this pat that I put by for  
 George;

He always loved my butter.

*F.* That he did.

*M.* And has your speckled hen  
 brought off her brood?

*F.* Not yet; but that old duck I told  
 you of,  
 She hatched eleven out of twelve to-  
 day.

*Child.* And, Granny, they're so yel-  
 low.

*M.* Ay, my lad,  
Yellow as gold — yellow as Willie's hair.

*C.* They're all mine, Granny — father  
says they're mine.

*M.* To think of that!

*F.* Yes, Granny, only think!  
Why, father means to sell them when  
they're fat,

And put the money in the savings bank,  
And all against our Willie goes to  
school:

But Willie would not touch them — no,  
not he;

He knows that father would be angry  
else.

*C.* But I want one to play with — O,  
I want

A little yellow duck to take to bed!

*M.* What! would you rob the poor  
old mother, then?

*F.* Now, Granny, if you'll hold the  
babe awhile;

'Tis time I took up Willie to his crib.

[*Exit FRANCES.*]

[*Mother sings to the infant.*]

Playing on the virginals,  
Who but I? Sae glad, sae free,  
Smelling for all cordials,  
The green mint and marjorie;  
Set among the budding broom,  
Kingcup and daffodilly,  
By my side I made him room:  
O love my Willie!

"Like me, love me, girl o' gowd,"  
Sang he to my nimble strain;  
Sweet his ruddy lips o'erflowed  
Till my heartstrings rang again:  
By the broom, the bonny broom,  
Kingcup and daffodilly,  
In my heart I made him room:  
O love my Willie!

"Pipe and play, dear heart," sang he,  
"I must go, yet pipe and play;  
Soon I'll come and ask of thee  
For an answer yea or nay;"  
And I waited till the flocks  
Panted in yon waters stilly,  
And the corn stood in the shocks:  
O love my Willie!

I thought first when thou didst come  
I would wear the ring for thee,  
But the year told out its sum  
Ere again thou sat'st by me;  
Thou hadst nought to ask that day  
By kingcup and daffodilly;  
I said neither yea nor nay:  
O love my Willie!

*Enter GEORGE.*

*G.* Well, mother, 'tis a fortnight now,  
or more,  
Since I set eyes on you.

*M.* Ay, George, my dear,  
I reckon you've been busy: so have we.

*G.* And how does father?

*M.* He gets through his work,  
But he grows stiff, a little stiff, my dear;  
He's not so young, you know, by twenty  
years,

As I am — not so young by twenty years,  
And I'm past sixty.

*G.* Yet he's hale and stout,  
And seems to take a pleasure in his  
pipe;  
And seems to take a pleasure in his  
cows,  
And a pride, too.

*M.* And well he may, my dear.

*G.* Give me the little one, he tires  
your arm;  
He's such a kicking, crowing, wakeful  
rogue,  
He almost wears our lives out with his  
noise

Just at day-dawning, when we wish to  
sleep.

What! you young villain, would you  
clench your fist

In father's curls? a dusty father, sure,  
And you're as clean as wax.

Ay, you may laugh;  
But if you live a seven years more or so,  
These hands of yours will all be brown  
and scratched

With climbing after nest-eggs. They'll  
go down

As many rat-holes as are round the  
mere;

And you'll love mud, all manner of  
mud and dirt,

As your father did afore you, and you'll  
wade



After young water-birds; and you'll  
get bogged  
Setting of eel-traps, and you'll spoil  
your clothes,  
And come home torn and dripping:  
then, you know,  
You'll feel the stick—you'll feel the  
stick, my lad!

*Enter FRANCES.*

*F.* You should not talk so to the  
blessed babe—

How can you, George? why, he may  
be in heaven

Before the time you tell of.

*M.* Look at him:  
So earnest, such an eager pair of eyes!  
He thrives, my dear.

*F.* Yes, that he does, thank God!  
My children are all strong.

*M.* 'Tis much to say;  
Sick children fret their mothers' hearts  
to shreds,

And do no credit to their keep nor care.  
Where is your little lass?

*F.* Your daughter came  
And begged her of us for a week or so.

*M.* Well, well, she might be wiser,  
that she might,

For she can sit at ease and pay her  
way;

A sober husband, too—a cheerful  
man—

Honest as ever stepped, and fond of  
her;

Yet she is never easy, never glad,  
Because she has not children. Well-a-  
day!

If she could know how hard her mother  
worked,

And what ado I had, and what a moil  
With my half-dozen! Children, ay,  
forsooth,

They bring their own love with them  
when they come,

But if they come not there is peace and  
rest;

The pretty lambs! and yet she cries  
for more:

Why, the world's full of them, and so  
is heaven—

They are not rare.

*G.* No, mother, not at  
all;

But Hannah must not keep our Fanny  
long—

She spoils her.

*M.* Ah! folks spoil their  
children now;

When I was a young woman 'twas not  
so;

We made our children fear us, made  
them work,

Kept them in order.

*G.* Were not proud  
of them—

Eh, mother?

*M.* I set store by mine, 'tis  
true,

But then I had good cause.

*G.* My lad,

d'ye hear?

Your Granny was not proud, by no  
means proud!

She never spoilt your father—no, not  
she,

Nor ever made him sing at harvest-  
home,

Nor at the forge, nor at the baker's  
shop,

Nor to the doctor while she lay abed  
Sick, and he crept up stairs to share  
her broth.

*M.* Well, well, you were my young-  
est, and, what's more,

Your father loved to hear you sing—he  
did,

Although, good man, he could not tell  
one tune

From the other.

*F.* No, he got his voice  
from you:

Do use it, George, and send the child  
to sleep.

*G.* What must I sing?

*F.* The ballad of the man

That is so shy he cannot speak his mind.

*G.* Ay, of the purple grapes and  
crimson leaves;

But, mother, put your shawl and bon-  
net off.

And, Frances, lass, I brought some  
cresses in:

Just wash them, toast the bacon, break  
some eggs,

And let's to supper shortly.

[Sings.]

My neighbor White — we met to-day —  
He always had a cheerful way,  
As if he breathed at ease;  
My neighbor White lives down the  
glade,  
And I live higher, in the shade  
Of my old walnut-trees.

So many lads and lasses small,  
To feed them all, to clothe them all,  
Must surely tax his wit;  
I see his thatch when I look out,  
His branching roses creep about,  
And vines half smother it.

There white-haired urchins climb his  
eaves,  
And little watch-fires heap with leaves,  
And milky filberts hoard;  
And there his oldest daughter stands  
With downcast eyes and skilful hands  
Before her ironing-board.

She comforts all her mother's days,  
And with her sweet obedient ways  
She makes her labor light;  
So sweet to hear, so fair to see!  
O, she is much too good for me,  
That lovely Lettice White!

'Tis hard to feel one's self a fool!  
With that same lass I went to school —  
I then was great and wise;  
She read upon an easier book,  
And I — I never cared to look  
Into her shy blue eyes.

And now I know they must be there,  
Sweet eyes, behind those lashes fair  
That will not raise their rim:  
If maids be shy, he cures who can;  
But if a man be shy — a man —  
Why then the worse for him!

My mother cries, "For such a lad  
A wife is easy to be had  
And always to be found;  
A finer scholar scarce can be,  
And for a foot and leg," says she,  
"He beats the country round!

"My handsome boy must stoop his head  
To clear her door whom he would wed."

Weak praise, but fondly sung!  
"O mother! scholars sometimes fail —  
And what can foot and leg avail  
To him that wants a tongue?"

When by her ironing-board I sit,  
Her little sisters round me flit,  
And bring me forth their store;  
Dark cluster grapes of dusty blue,  
And small sweet apples, bright of hue  
And crimson to the core.

But she abideth silent, fair;  
All shaded by her flaxen hair  
The blushes come and go;  
I look, and I no more can speak  
Than the red sun that on her cheek  
Smiles as he lieth low.

Sometimes the roses by the latch,  
Or scarlet vine-leaves from her thatch,  
Come sailing down like birds;  
When from their drifts her board I clear,  
She thanks me, but I scarce can hear  
The shyly uttered words.

Oft have I wooed sweet Lettice White  
By daylight and by candlelight  
When we two were apart.  
Some better day come on apace,  
And let me tell her face to face,  
"Maiden, thou hast my heart."

How gently rock yon poplars high  
Against the reach of primrose sky  
With heaven's pale candles stored!  
She sees them all, sweet Lettice White;  
I'll e'en go sit again to-night  
Beside her ironing-board!

Why, you young rascal! who would  
think it, now?  
No sooner do I stop than you look up.  
What would you have your poor old  
father do?

'Twas a brave song, long-winded, and  
not loud.

M. He heard the bacon  
sputter on the fork,  
And heard his mother's step across the  
floor.

Where did you get that song?—'tis new to me.

G. I bought it of a pedlar.

M. Did you so?  
Well, you were always for the love-songs, George.

F. My dear, just lay his head upon your arm,

And if you'll pace and sing two minutes more

He needs must sleep—his eyes are full of sleep.

G. Do you sing, mother.

F. Ay, good mother, do;  
'Tis long since we have heard you.

M. Like enough;  
I'm an old woman, and the girls and lads

I used to sing to sleep o'er top me now.  
What should I sing for?

G. Why, to pleasure us.  
Sing in the chimney corner, where you sit,

And I'll pace gently with the little one.

*[Mother sings.]*

When sparrows build, and the leaves break forth,

My old sorrow wakes and cries,  
For I know there is dawn in the far, far north,

And a scarlet sun doth rise;  
Like a scarlet fleece the snow-field spreads,

And the icy founts run free,  
And the bergs begin to bow their heads,

And plunge, and sail in the sea.

O my lost love, and my own, own love,  
And my love that loved me so!

Is there never a chink in the world above

Where they listen for words from below?

Nay, I spoke once, and I grieved thee sore,

I remember all that I said,  
And now thou wilt hear me no more—  
no more

Till the sea gives up her dead.

Thou didst set thy foot on the ship,  
and sail

To the ice-fields and the snow;  
Thou wert sad, for thy love did nought avail,

And the end I could not know;  
How could I tell I should love thee to-day,

Whom that day I held not dear?  
How could I know I should love thee away

When I did not love thee anear?

We shall walk no more through the sodden plain

With the faded bents o'erspread,  
We shall stand no more by the seething main

While the dark wrack drives o'er-head;

We shall part no more in the wind and the rain,

Where thy last farewell was said:  
But perhaps I shall meet thee and know thee again

When the sea gives up her dead.

F. Asleep at last, and time he was, indeed.

Turn back the cradle-quilt, and lay him in;

And, mother, will you please to draw your chair?—

The supper's ready.

SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER.

WHILE ripening corn grew thick and deep,

And here and there men stood to reap,  
One morn I put my heart to sleep,

And to the lanes I took my way.  
The goldfinch on a thistle-head

Stood scattering seedlets while she fed;  
The wrens their pretty gossip spread,

Or joined a random roundelay.

On hanging cobwebs shone the dew,  
And thick the wayside clovers grew;

The feeding bee had much to do,  
So fast did honey-drops exude:

She sucked and murmured, and was  
gone,  
And lit on other blooms anon,  
The while I learned a lesson on  
The source and sense of quietude.

For sheep-bells chiming from a wold,  
Or bleat of lamb within its fold,  
Or cooing of love-legends old

To dove-wives make not quiet less;  
Ecstatic chirp of winged thing,  
Or bubbling of the water-spring,  
Are sounds that more than silence  
bring  
Itself and its delightsomeness.

While thus I went to gladness fain,  
I had but walked a mile or twain  
Before my heart woke up again,  
As dreaming she had slept too late;  
The morning freshness that she viewed  
With her own meanings she endued,  
And touched with her solicitude  
The natures she did meditate.

"If quiet is, for it I wait;  
To it, ah! let me wed my fate,  
And, like a sad wife, supplicate  
My roving lord no more to flee;  
If leisure is — but, ah! 'tis not —  
'Tis long past praying for, God wot.  
The fashion of it men forgot,  
About the age of chivalry.

"Sweet is the leisure of the bird;  
She craves no time for work deferred;  
Her wings are not to aching stirred  
Providing for her helpless ones.  
Fair is the leisure of the wheat;  
All night the damps about it fleet;  
All day it basketh in the heat,  
And grows, and whispers orisons.

"Grand is the leisure of the earth;  
She gives her happy myriads birth,  
And after harvest fears not dearth,  
But goes to sleep in snow-wreaths  
dim.

Dread is the leisure up above  
The while He sits whose name is Love,  
And waits, as Noah did, for the dove,  
To wit if she would fly to him.

"He waits for us, while, houseless  
things,

We beat about with bruised wings  
On the dark floods and water-springs,  
The ruined world, the desolate sea;  
With open windows from the prime  
All night, all day, He waits sublime,  
Until the fulness of the time  
Decreed from His eternity.

"Where is OUR leisure? — Give us rest.  
Where is the quiet we possessed?  
We must have had it once — were blest  
With peace whose phantoms yet  
entice.

Sorely the mother of mankind  
Longed for the garden left behind;  
For we still prove some yearnings  
blind  
Inherited from Paradise."

"Hold, heart!" I cried; "for trouble  
sleeps;

I hear no sound of aught that weeps;  
I will not look into thy deeps —  
I am afraid, I am afraid!"

"Afraid!" she saith; "and yet 'tis  
true  
That what man dreads he still should  
view —

Should do the thing he fears to do,  
And storm the ghosts in ambushade."

"What good?" I sigh. "Was rea-  
son meant

To straighten branches that are bent,  
Or soothe an ancient discontent,  
The instinct of a race dethroned?  
Ah! doubly should that instinct go  
Must the four rivers cease to flow,  
Nor yield those rumors sweet and low  
Wherewith man's life is undertoned."

"Yet had I but the past," she cries,  
"And it was lost, I would arise  
And comfort me some other wise.

But more than loss about me clings:  
I am but restless with my race;  
The whispers from a heavenly place,  
Once dropped among us, seem to chase  
Rest with their prophet-visittings.

"The race is like a child, as yet  
Too young for all things to be set  
Plainly before him with no let

Or hindrance meet for his degree ;  
But ne'ertheless by much too old  
Not to perceive that men withhold  
More of the story than is told,  
And so infer a mystery.

"If the Celestials daily fly  
With messages on missions high,  
And float, our masts and turrets nigh,  
Conversing on Heaven's great in-  
tents ;  
What wonder hints of coming things,  
Whereto man's hope and yearning  
clings,  
Should drop like feathers from their  
wings  
And give us vague presentiments ?

"And as the waxing moon can take  
The tidal waters in her wake  
And lead them round and round to  
break

Obedient to her drawings dim ;  
So may the movements of his mind,  
The first Great Father of mankind,  
Affect with answering movements blind,  
And draw the souls that breathe by  
Him.

"We had a message long ago  
That like a river peace should flow,  
And Eden bloom again below.

We heard, and we began to wait :  
Full soon that message men forgot ;  
Yet waiting is their destined lot,  
And waiting for they know not what  
They strive with yearnings passion-  
ate.

"Regret and faith alike enchain ;  
There was a loss, there comes a gain ;  
We stand at fault betwixt the twain,  
And that is veiled for which we pant.  
Our lives are short, our ten times seven ;  
We think the councils held in heaven  
Sit long, ere yet that blissful leaven  
Work peace amongst the militant.

"Then we blame God that sin should  
be :  
Adam began it at the tree,  
'The woman whom THOU gavest me ;'  
And we adopt his dark device.  
O long Thou tarriest ! come and reign,

And bring forgiveness in Thy train,  
And give us in our hands again  
The apples of Thy Paradise."

"Far-seeing heart ! if that be all,  
The happy things that did not fall,"  
I sighed, "from every coppice call  
They never from that garden went.  
Behold their joy, so comfort thee,  
Behold the blossom and the bee,  
For they are yet as good and free  
As when poor Eve was innocent.

"But reason thus : 'If we sank low,  
If the lost garden we forego,  
Each in his day, nor ever know  
But in our poet souls its face ;  
Yet we may rise until we reach  
A height untold of in its speech—  
A lesson that it could not teach  
Learn in this darker dwelling-place.'

"And reason on : 'We take the spoil ;  
Loss made us poets, and the soil  
Taught us great patience in our toil,  
And life is kin to God through death.  
Christ were not One with us but so,  
And if bereft of Him we go ;  
Dearer the heavenly mansions grow,  
His home, to man that wandereth.'

"Content thee so, and ease thy smart,"  
With that she slept again, my heart,  
And I admired and took my part  
With crowds of happy things the  
while :  
With open velvet butterflies  
That swung and spread their peacock  
eyes,  
As if they cared no more to rise  
From off their beds of caniomile.

The blackcaps in an orchard met,  
Praising the berries while they ate :  
The finch that flew her beak to whet  
Before she joined them on the tree ;  
The water mouse among the reeds—  
His bright eyes glancing black as beads,  
So happy with a bunch of seeds—  
I felt their gladness heartily.

But I came on, I smelt the hay,  
And up the hills I took my way,  
And down them still made holiday,

And walked, and wearied not a whit;  
But ever with the lane I went  
Until it dropped with steep descent,  
Cut deep into the rock, a tent  
Of maple branches roofing it.

Adown the rock small runlets wept,  
And reckless ivies leaned and crept,  
And little spots of sunshine slept

On its brown steeps and made them  
fair;

And broader beams athwart it shot,  
Where martins cheeped in many a  
knot,

For they had ta'en a sandy plot  
And scooped another Petra there.

And deeper down, hemmed in and hid  
From upper light and life amid

The swallows gossiping, I thrid

Its mazes, till the dipping land

Sank to the level of my lane:

That was the last hill of the chain,

And fair below I saw the plain

That seemed cold cheer to reprimand.

Half-drowned in sleepy peace it lay,  
As satiate with the boundless play  
Of sunshine on its green array.

And clear-cut hills of gloomy blue

To keep it safe rose up behind,

As with a charmed ring to bind

The grassy sea, where clouds might  
find

A place to bring their shadows to.

I said, and blest that pastoral grace,

"How sweet thou art, thou sunny  
place!

Thy God approves thy smiling face:"

But straight my heart put in her  
word;

She said, "Albeit thy face I bless,  
There have been times, sweet wilder-  
ness,

When I have wished to love thee less,  
Such pangs thy smile administered."

But, lo! I reached a field of wheat,

And by its gate full clear and sweet

A workman sang, while at his feet

Played a young child, all life and  
stir —

A three years' child, with rosy lip,  
Who in the song had partnership,  
Made happy with each falling chip  
Dropped by the busy carpenter.

This, reared a new gate for the old,  
And loud the tuneful measure rolled,  
But stopped as I came up to hold

Some kindly talk of passing things.

Brave were his eyes, and frank his  
mien;

Of all men's faces, calm or keen,

A better I have never seen

In all my lonely wanderings.

And how it was I scarce can tell,  
We seemed to please each other well;  
I lingered till a noonday bell

Had sounded, and his task was done.

An oak had screened us from the heat;

And 'neath it in the standing wheat,

A cradle and a fair retreat,

Full sweetly slept the little one.

The workman rested from his stroke,  
And manly were the words he spoke,  
Until the smiling babe awoke

And prayed to him for milk and food.

Then to a runlet forth he went,

And brought a wallet from the bent,

And bade me to the meal, intent

I should not quit his neighborhood.

"For here," said he, "are bread and  
beer,

And meat enough to make good cheer;

Sir, eat with me, and have no fear,

For none upon my work depend,

Saving this child; and I may say

That I am rich, for every day

I put by somewhat; therefore stay,

And to such eating condescend."

We ate. The child — child fair to  
see —

Began to cling about his knee,

And he down leaning fatherly

Received some softly-prattled prayer;

He smiled as if to list were balm,

And with his labor-hardened palm

Pushed from the baby-forehead calm

Those shining locks that clustered  
there.

The rosy mouth made fresh essay —  
 "O would he sing or would he play?"  
 I looked, my thought would make its way —

"Fair is your child of face and limb,  
 The round blue eyes full sweetly shine."

He answered me with glance benign —  
 "Ay, Sir; but he is none of mine,  
 Although I set great store by him."

With that, as if his heart was fain  
 To open — nathless not complain —  
 He let my quiet questions gain

His story: "Not of kin to me,"  
 Repeating; "but asleep, awake,  
 For worse, for better, him I take,  
 To cherish for my dead wife's sake,  
 And count him as her legacy."

"I married with the sweetest lass  
 That ever stepped on meadow grass;  
 That ever at her looking-glass  
 Some pleasure took, some natural care;

That ever swept a cottage floor  
 And worked all day, nor e'er gave o'er  
 Till eve, then watched beside the door  
 Till her good man should meet her there.

"But I lost all in its fresh prime;  
 My wife fell ill before her time —  
 Just as the bells began to chime  
 One Sunday morn. By next day's light

Her little babe was born and dead,  
 And she, unconscious what she said,  
 With feeble hands about her spread,  
 Sought it with yearnings infinite.

"With mother-longing still beguiled,  
 And lost in fever-fancies wild,  
 She piteously bemoaned her child  
 That we had stolen, she said, away.  
 And ten sad days she sighed to me,  
 'I cannot rest until I see  
 My pretty one! I think that he  
 Smiled in my face but yesterday.'

"Then she would change, and faintly try  
 To sing some tender lullaby;  
 And 'Ah!' would moan, 'if I should die,

Who, sweetest babe, would cherish thee?"

Then weep, 'My pretty boy is grown;  
 With tender feet on the cold stone  
 He stands, for he can stand alone,  
 And no one leads him motherly.'

"Then she with dying movements slow  
 Would seem to knit, or seem to sew:  
 'His feet are bare, he must not go  
 Unshod:' and as her death drew on,  
 'O little baby,' she would sigh;  
 'My little child, I cannot die  
 Till I have you to slumber nigh —  
 You, you to set mine eyes upon.'

"When she spake thus, and moaning lay,  
 They said, 'She cannot pass away,  
 So sore she longs:' and as the day  
 Broke on the hills, I left her side.  
 Mourning along this lane I went:  
 Some travelling folk had pitched their tent

Up yonder: there a woman, bent  
 With age, sat meanly canopied.

"A twelvemonths' child was at her side:  
 'Whose infant may that be?' I cried.  
 'His that will own him,' she replied;  
 'His mother's dead, no worse could be.'

'Since you can give—or else I erred—  
 See, you are taken at your word,'  
 Quoth I; 'That child is mine; I heard,  
 And own him! Rise, and give him me.'

"She rose amazed, but cursed me too;  
 She could not hold such luck for true,  
 But gave him soon, with small ado.

I laid him by my Lucy's side:  
 Close to her face that baby crept,  
 And stroked it, and the sweet soul wept;  
 Then, while upon her arm he slept,  
 She passed, for she was satisfied.

"I loved her well, I wept her sore,  
 And when her funeral left my door  
 I thought that I should never more  
 Feel any pleasure near me glow;

But I have learned, though this I had,  
'Tis sometimes natural to be glad,  
And no man can be always sad  
Unless he wills to have it so.

"Oh, I had heavy nights at first,  
And daily wakening was the worst :  
For then my grief arose, and burst  
Like something fresh upon my head ;  
Yet when less keen it seemed to grow,  
I was not pleased — I wished to go  
Mourning adown this vale of woe,  
For all my life uncomforted.

"I grudged myself the lightsome air,  
That makes man cheerful unaware ;  
When comfort came, I did not care  
To take it in, to feel it stir :  
And yet God took with me His plan,  
And now for my appointed span  
I think I am a happier man  
For having wed and wept for her.

"Because no natural tie remains,  
On this small thing I spend my gains ;  
God makes me love him for my pains,  
And binds me so to wholesome care :  
I would not lose from my past life  
That happy year, that happy year !  
Yet now I wage no useless strife  
With feelings blithe and debonair.

"I have the courage to be gay,  
Although she lieth lapped away  
Under the daisies, for I say,  
'Thou wouldst be glad if thou couldst  
see :'  
My constant thought makes manifest  
I have not what I love the best,  
But I must thank God for the rest  
While I hold heaven a verity."

He rose, upon his shoulder set  
The child, and while with vague regret  
We parted, pleased that we had met,  
My heart did with herself confer ;  
With wholesome shame she did repent  
Her reasonings idly eloquent,  
And said, "I might be more content :  
But God go with the carpenter."

## THE STAR'S MONUMENT.

IN THE CONCLUDING PART OF A DIS-  
COURSE ON FAME.

[*He thinks.*]

IF there be memory in the world to  
come,  
If thought recur to SOME THINGS si-  
lenced here,  
Then shall the deep heart be no longer  
dumb,  
But find expression in that happier  
sphere ;  
It shall not be denied their utmost sum  
Of love, to speak without or fault or  
fear,  
But utter to the harp with changes  
sweet  
Words that, forbidden still, then heaven  
were incomplete.

[*He speaks.*]

Now let us talk about the ancient days,  
And things which happened long be-  
fore our birth :  
It is a pity to lament that praise  
Should be no shadow in the train of  
worth.  
What is it, Madam, that your heart  
dismays ?  
Why murmur at the course of this vast  
earth ?  
Think rather of the work than of the  
praise ;  
Come, we will talk about the ancient  
days.

There was a Poet, Madam, once (said  
he) ;  
I will relate his story to you now,  
While through the branches of this  
apple-tree  
Some spots of sunshine flicker on  
your brow ;  
While every flower hath on its breast a  
bee,  
And every bird in stirring doth en-  
dow  
The grass with falling blooms that  
smoothly glide,  
As ships drop down a river with the  
tide.



For telling of his tale no fitter place  
Than this old orchard, sloping to the west;

Through its pink dome of blossom I  
can trace

Some overlying azure; for the rest,  
These flowery branches round us interlace;

The ground is hollowed like a mossy nest:

Who talks of fame while the religious spring

Offers the incense of her blossoming?

There was a Poet, Madam, once (said he),

Who, while he walked at sundown in a lane,

Took to his heart the hope that destiny  
Had singled him this guerdon to obtain,

That by the power of his sweet minstrelsy

Some hearts for truth and goodness he should gain,

And charm some grovellers to uplift their eyes

And suddenly wax conscious of the skies.

"Master, good e'en to ye!" a woodman said,

Who the low hedge was trimming with his shears.

"This hour is fine" — the Poet bowed his head.

"More fine," he thought, "O friend! to me appears

The sunset than to you; finer the spread

Of orange lustre through these azure spheres,

Where little clouds lie still, like flocks of sheep,

Or vessels sailing in God's other deep.

"O finer far! What work so high as mine,

Interpreter betwixt the world and man,

Nature's ungathered pearls to set and shrine,

The mystery she wraps her in to scan;

Her unsyllabic voices to combine,

And serve her with such love as poets can;

With mortal words, her chant of praise to bind,

Then die, and leave the poem to mankind?

"O fair, O fine, O lot to be desired!

Early and late my heart appeals to me,  
And says, 'O work, O will — Thou man, be fired

To earn this lot,' — she says, 'I would not be

A worker for mine own bread, or one hired

For mine own profit. O, I would be free

To work for others; love so earned of them

Should be my wages and my diadem.

"Then when I died I should not fall," says she,

'Like dropping flowers that no man noticeth,

But like a great branch of some stately tree

Rent in a tempest, and flung down to death,

Thick with green leafage — so that piteously

Each passer by that ruin shuddereth,  
And saith, The gap this branch hath left is wide;

The loss thereof can never be supplied."

But, Madam, while the Poet pondered so,

Toward the leafy hedge he turned his eye,

And saw two slender branches that did grow,

And from it rising spring and flourish high:

Their tops were twined together fast, and, lo,

Their shadow crossed the path as he went by —

The shadow of a wild rose and a briar,  
And it was shaped in semblance like a lyre.

In sooth, a lyre! and as the soft air  
played,  
Those branches stirred, but did not  
disunite.

"O emblem meet for me!" the Poet  
said;

"Ay, I accept and own thee for my  
right;

The shadowy lyre across my feet is laid,  
Distinct though frail, and clear with  
crimson light:

Fast is it twined to bear the windy  
strain,

And, supple, it will bend and rise  
again.

"This lyre is cast across the dusty way,  
The common path that common men  
pursue;

I crave like blessing for my shadowy  
lay,

Life's trodden paths with beauty to  
renew,  
And cheer the eve of many a toil-  
stained day.

Light it, old sun, wet it, thou com-  
mon dew,  
That 'neath men's feet its image still  
may be

While yet it waves above them, living  
lyre, like thee!"

But even as the Poet spoke, behold  
He lifted up his face toward the sky;  
The ruddy sun dipt under the grey  
wold,

His shadowy lyre was gone; and,  
passing by,  
The woodman lifting up his shears,  
was bold

Their temper on those branches twain  
to try,  
And all their loveliness and leafage  
sweet

Fell in the pathway, at the Poet's feet.

"Ah! my fair emblem that I chose,"  
quoth he,

"That for myself I coveted but now,  
Too soon, methinks, thou hast been  
false to me;

The lyre from pathway fades, the  
light from brow."

Then straightway turned he from it  
hastily,

As dream that waking sense will dis-  
allow;

And while the highway heavenward  
paled apace,

He went on westward to his dwelling-  
place.

He went on steadily, while far and fast  
The summer darkness dropped upon  
the world,

A gentle air among the cloudlets passed  
And fanned away their crimson; then  
it curled

The yellow poppies in the field, and  
cast

A dimness on the grasses, for it  
furled

Their daisies, and swept out the purple  
stain

That eve had left upon the pastoral  
plain.

He reached his city. Lo! the dark-  
ened street

Where he abode was full of gazing  
crowds;

He heard the muffled tread of many  
feet;

A multitude stood gazing at the  
clouds.

"What mark ye there," said he, "and  
wherefore meet?"

Only a passing mist the heaven o'er-  
shrouds;

It breaks, it parts, it drifts like scattered  
spars—

What lies behind it but the nightly  
stars?"

Then did the gazing crowd to him  
aver

They sought a lamp in heaven whose  
light was hid;

For that in sooth an old Astronomer  
Down from his roof had rushed into

their mid,  
Frighted, and fain with others to con-  
fer,

That he had cried, "O sirs!"—and  
upward bid

Them gaze — "O sirs, a light is quenched  
afar;  
Look up, my masters, we have lost a  
star!"

The people pointed, and the Poet's eyes  
Flew upward, where a gleaming sisterhood

Swam in the dewy heaven. The very  
skies

Were mutable; for all-amazed he  
stood

To see that truly not in any wise  
He could behold them as of old, nor  
could

His eyes receive the whole whereof he  
wot,

But when he told them over, one WAS  
NOT.

While yet he gazed and pondered reverently,

The fickle folk began to move  
away.

"It is but one star less for us to  
see;

And what does one star signify?" quoth  
they;

"The heavens are full of them." "But,  
ah!" said he,

"That star was bright while yet she  
lasted." "Ay!"

They answered: "praise her, Poet, and  
ye will:

Some are now shining that are brighter  
still."

"Poor star! to be disparaged so soon  
On her withdrawal," thus the Poet  
sighed;

"That men should miss, and straight  
deny her noon

Its brightness!" But the people in  
their pride

Said, "How are we beholden? 'twas no  
boon

She gave. Her nature 'twas to shine  
so wide:

She could not choose but shine, nor  
could we know

Such star had ever dwelt in heaven but  
so."

The Poet answered sadly, "That is  
true!"

And then he thought upon unthank-  
fulness;

While some went homeward; and the  
residue,

Reflecting that the stars are number-  
less,

Mourned that man's daylight hours  
should be so few,

So short the shining that his path  
may bless:

To nearer themes then tuned their  
willing lips,

And thought no more upon the star's  
eclipse.

But he, the Poet, could not rest content  
Till he had found that old Astrono-  
mer;

Therefore at midnight to his house  
he went

And prayed him be his tale's inter-  
preter.

And yet upon the heaven his eyes he  
bent,

Hearing the marvel; yet he sought  
for her

That was awaiting, in the hope her face  
Once more might fill its reft abiding-  
place.

Then said the old Astronomer: "My  
son,

I sat alone upon my roof to-night;  
I saw the stars come forth, and scarcely  
shun

To fringe the edges of the western  
light;

I marked those ancient clusters one by  
one,

The same that blessed our old fore-  
father's sight:

For God alone is older — none but He  
Can charge the stars with mutability:

"The elders of the night, the stead-  
fast stars,

The old, old stars which God has let  
us see,

That they might be our soul's auxiliars,  
And help us to the truth how young  
we be —

God's youngest, latest born, as if, some  
 spars  
 And a little clay being over of them  
 — He  
 Had made our world and us thereof,  
 yet given,  
 To humble us, the sight of His great  
 heaven.

"But ah! my son, to-night mine eyes  
 have seen  
 The death of light, the end of old  
 renown;  
 A shrinking back of glory that had been,  
 A dread eclipse before the Eternal's  
 frown.  
 How soon a little grass will grow be-  
 tween  
 These eyes and those appointed to  
 look down  
 Upon a world that was not made on  
 high  
 Till the last scenes of their long em-  
 pire!"

"To-night that shining cluster now de-  
 spoiled  
 Lay in day's wake a perfect sister-  
 hood;  
 Sweet was its light to me that long had  
 toiled,  
 It gleamed and trembled o'er the  
 distant wood;  
 Blown in a pile the clouds from it re-  
 coiled,  
 Cool twilight up the sky her way  
 made good;  
 I saw, but not believed—it was so  
 strange—  
 That one of those same stars had suf-  
 fered change.

"The darkness gathered, and me-  
 thought she spread,  
 Wrapped in a reddish haze that  
 waxed and waned;  
 But notwithstanding to myself I said—  
 'The stars are changeless; sure some  
 mote hath stained  
 Mine eyes, and her fair glory min-  
 ished.'  
 Of age and failing vision I com-  
 plained,

And thought 'some vapor in the heav-  
 ens doth swim,  
 That makes her look so large and yet  
 so dim.'

"But I gazed round, and all her lus-  
 trous peers  
 In her red presence showed but wan  
 and white;  
 For like a living coal beheld through  
 tears  
 She glowed and quivered with a  
 gloomy light:  
 Methought she trembled, as all sick  
 through fears,  
 Helpless, appalled, appealing to the  
 night;  
 Like one who throws his arms up to  
 the sky  
 And bows down suffering, hopeless of  
 reply.

"At length, as if an everlasting Hand  
 Had taken hold upon her in her  
 place,  
 And swiftly, like a golden grain of  
 sand,  
 Through all the deep infinitudes of  
 space  
 Was drawing her—God's truth as  
 here I stand—  
 Backward and inward to itself; her  
 face  
 Fast lessened, lessened, till it looked  
 no more  
 Than smallest atom on a boundless  
 shore.

And she that was so fair, I saw her lie.  
 The smallest thing in God's great  
 firmament,  
 Till night was at the darkest, and on  
 high  
 Her sisters glittered, though her  
 light was spent;  
 I strained, to follow her, each aching  
 eye,  
 So swiftly at her Maker's will she  
 went;  
 I looked again—I looked—the star  
 was gone,  
 And nothing marked in heaven where  
 she had shone."

"Gone!" said the Poet, "and about  
to be  
Forgotten: O, how sad a fate is  
hers!"

"How is it sad, my son?" all rever-  
ently

The old man answered; "though  
she ministers

No longer with her lamp to me and  
thee,

She has fulfilled her mission. God  
transfers

Or dims her ray; yet was she blest as  
bright,

For all her life was spent in giving  
light."

"Her mission she fulfilled assuredly,"  
The Poet cried: "but, O unhappy  
star!

None praise and few will bear in memory  
The name she went by. O, from far,  
from far

Comes down, methinks, her mournful  
voice to me,

Full of regrets that men so thankless  
are."

So said, he told that old Astronomer  
All that the gazing crowd had said of  
her.

And he went on to speak in bitter wise,  
As one who seems to tell another's  
fate,

But feels that nearer meaning underlies,  
And points its sadness to his own es-  
tate:

"If such be the reward," he said with  
sighs,

"Envy to earn for love, for goodness  
hate—

If such be thy reward, hard case is  
thine!

It had been better for thee not to shine.

"If to reflect a light that is divine  
Makes that which doth reflect it bet-  
ter seen,

And if to see is to condemn the shrine,  
'Twere surely better it had never  
been:

It had been better for her NOT TO  
SHINE,

And for me NOT TO SING. Better, I  
ween,

For us to yield no more that radiance  
bright,

For them, to lack the light than scorn  
the light."

Strange words were those from Poet  
lips (said he);

And then he paused, and sighed, and  
turned to look

Upon the lady's downcast eyes, and see  
How fast the honey bees in settling  
shook

Those apple blossoms on her from the  
tree;

He watched her busy fingers as they  
took

And slipped the knotted thread, and  
thought how much

He would have given that hand to hold  
—to touch.

At length, as suddenly become aware  
Of this long pause, she lifted up her  
face,

And he withdrew his eyes—she looked  
so fair

And cold, he thought, in her uncon-  
scious grace.

"Ah! little dreams she of the restless  
care,"

He thought, "that makes my heart  
to throb apace:

Though we this morning part, the  
knowledge sends

No thrill to her calm pulse—we are  
but FRIENDS."

Ah! turret clock (he thought), I would  
thy hand

Were hid behind yon towering maple-  
trees!

Ah! tell-tale shadow, but one moment  
stand—

Dark shadow—fast advancing to my  
knees;

Ah! foolish heart (he thought), that  
vainly planned

By feigning gladness to arrive at ease;  
Ah! painful hour, yet pain to think it  
ends;

I must remember that we are but  
friends.

And while the knotted thread moved  
to and fro,

In sweet regretful tones that lady said:  
"It seemeth that the fame you would  
forego

The Poet whom you tell of coveted;  
But I would fain, methinks, his story  
know.

And was he loved?" said she, "or  
was he wed?

And had he friends?" "One friend,  
perhaps," said he;

"But for the rest, I pray you let it be."

Ah! little bird (he thought), most pa-  
tient bird,

Breasting thy speckled eggs the long  
day through,

By so much as my reason is preferred  
Above thine instinct, I my work  
would do

Better than thou dost thine. Thou  
hast not stirred

This hour thy wing. Ah! russet  
bird, I sue

For a like patience to wear through  
these hours—

Bird on thy nest among the apple-  
flowers.

I will not speak—I will not speak to  
thee,

My star! and soon to be my lost, lost  
star.

The sweetest, first, that ever shone on  
me,

So high above me and beyond so far;  
I can forego thee, but not bear to see

My love, like rising mist, thy lustre  
mar:

That were a base return for thy sweet  
light.

Shine, though I never more shall see  
that thou art bright.

Never! 'Tis certain that no hope is—  
none!

No hope for me, and yet for thee no  
fear.

The hardest part of my hard task is  
done;

Thy calm assures me that I am not  
dear;

Though far and fast the rapid moments  
run,

Thy bosom heaveth not, thine eyes  
are clear;

Silent, perhaps a little sad at heart—  
She is. I am her friend, and I depart.

Silent she had been, but she raised her  
face;

"And will you end," said she, "this  
half-told tale?"

"Yes, it were best," he answered her.  
"The place

Where I left off was where he felt to  
fail

His courage, Madam, through the fancy  
base

That they who love, endure, or work,  
may rail

And cease—if all their love, the works  
they wrought,

And their endurance, men have set at  
nought."

'It had been better for me NOT to sing,"

My Poet said, "and for her NOT to  
shine;"

But him the old man answered, sorrow-  
ing,

"My son, did God who made her,  
the Divine

Lighter of suns, when down to yon  
bright ring

He cast her, like some gleaming al-  
mandine,

And set her in her place, begirt with  
rays,

Say unto her 'Give light,' or say  
'Earn praise?'"

The Poet said, "He made her to give  
light."

"My son," the old man answered,  
"blest are such,

A blessed lot is theirs; but if each night  
Mankind had praised her radiance—

inasmuch

As praise had never made it wax more  
bright,

And cannot now rekindle with its  
touch

Her lost effulgence, it is nought. I wot  
That praise was not her blessing nor  
her lot."

"Ay," said the Poet, "I my words  
abjure,

And I repent me that I uttered them ;  
But by her light and by its forfeiture  
She shall not pass without her re-  
quiem.

Though my name perish, yet shall hers  
endure ;

Though I should be forgotten, she,  
lost gem,  
Shall be remembered ; though she  
sought not fame,  
It shall be busy with her beauteous  
name.

"For I will raise in her bright memory,  
Lost now on earth, a lasting monu-  
ment,

And graven on it shall recorded be  
That all her rays to light mankind  
were spent ;

And I will sing albeit none heedeth me,  
On her exemplar being still intent :  
While in men's sight shall stand the  
record thus —

'So long as she did last she lighted  
us.'"

So said, he raised, according to his  
vow,

On the green grass, where oft his  
townsfolk met,

Under the shadow of a leafy bough  
That leaned toward a singing rivulet,  
One pure white stone, whereon, like  
crown on brow,

The image of the vanished star was  
set ;

And this was graven on the pure white  
stone

In golden letters — "WHILE SHE LIVED  
SHE SHONE."

Madam, I cannot give this story well —  
My heart is beating to another chime ;  
My voice must needs a different cadence  
swell ;

It is yon singing bird, which all the  
time  
Wooeth his nested mate, that doth dis-  
pel  
My thoughts. What, deem you, could  
a lover's rhyme

The sweetness of that passionate lay  
excel ?

O soft, O low her voice — "I cannot  
tell."

[*He thinks.*]

The old man — ay, he spoke, he was  
not hard ;

"She was his joy," he said, "his  
comforter,

But he would trust me. I was not de-  
barred

Whate'er my heart approved to say  
to her."

Approved! O torn and tempted and  
ill-starred

And breaking heart, approve not nor  
demur ;

It is the serpent that beguileth thee  
With "God doth know" beneath this  
apple-tree.

Yea, God DOTH know, and only God  
doth know.

Have pity, God, my spirit groans to  
Thee!

I bear Thy curse primeval, and I go ;  
But heavier than on Adam falls on me

My tillage of the wilderness ; for, lo!  
I leave behind the woman, and I see

As 't were the gates of Eden closing  
o'er

To hide her from my sight for evermore.

[*He speaks.*]

I am a fool, with sudden start he cried,  
To let the song-bird work me such  
unrest :

If I break off again, I pray you chide,  
For morning fleeteth, with my tale at  
best

Half told. That white stone, Madam,  
gleamed beside

The little rivulet, and all men pressed  
To read the lost one's story traced

thereon,  
The golden legend — "While she lived  
she shone."

And, Madam, when the Poet heard  
them read,

And children spell the letters softly  
through,

It may be that he felt at heart some  
need,  
Some craving to be thus remembered  
too ;

It may be that he wondered if indeed  
He must die wholly when he passed  
from view ;

It may be, wished, when death his eyes  
made dim,  
That some kind hand would raise such  
stone for him.

But shortly, as there comes to most of  
us,

There came to him the need to quit  
his home :

To tell you why were simply hazardous.  
What said I, Madam?—men were  
made to roam

My meaning is. It hath been always  
thus :

They are athirst for mountains and  
sea foam ;

Heirs of this world, what wonder if  
perchance

They long to see their grand inheri-  
tance?

He left his city, and went forth to teach  
Mankind, his peers, the hidden har-  
mony

That underlies God's discords, and to  
reach

And touch the master-string that like  
a sigh

Thrills in their souls, as if it would  
beseech

Some hand to sound it, and to sat-  
isfy

Its yearning for expression : but no  
word

Till poet touch it hath to make its mu-  
sic heard.

[*He thinks.*]

I know that God is good, though evil  
dwells

Among us, and doth all things holi-  
est share ;

That there is joy in heaven, while yet  
our knells

Sound for the souls which He has  
summoned there ;

That painful love unsatisfied hath  
spells

Earned by its smart to soothe its fel-  
low's care :

But yet this atom cannot in the  
whole

Forget itself—it aches a separate soul.

[*He speaks.*]

But, Madam, to my Poet I return.

With his sweet cadences of woven  
words

He made their rude untutored hearts  
to burn

And melt like gold refined. No  
brooding birds

Sing better of the love that doth so-  
journ

Hid in the nest of home, which softly  
girds

The beating heart of life ; and, strait  
though it be,

Is straitness better than wide liberty.

He taught them, and they learned, but  
not the less

Remained unconscious whence that  
lore they drew,

But dreamed that of their native noble-  
ness

Some lofty thoughts, that he had  
planted, grew ;

His glorious maxims in a lowly  
dress,

Like seed sown broadcast, sprung in  
all men's view.

The sower, passing onward, was not  
known,

And all men reaped the harvest as  
their own.

It may be, Madam, that those ballads  
sweet,

Whose rhythmic measures yesterday  
we sung,

Which time and changes make not ob-  
solete,

But (as a river bears down blossoms  
flung

Upon its breast) take with them while  
they fleet—

It may be from his lyre that first  
they sprung :



But who can tell, since work surviveth  
fame? —  
The rhyme is left, but lost the Poet's  
name.

He worked, and bravely he fulfilled  
his trust —

So long he wandered sowing worthy  
seed,  
Watering of wayside buds that were  
adust,

And touching for the common ear  
his reed —

So long to wear away the cankering  
rust

That dulls the gold of life — so long  
to plead

With sweetest music for all souls op-  
pressed,

That he was old ere he had thought of  
rest.

Old and grey-headed, leaning on a  
staff,

To that great city of his birth he  
came,

And at its gates he paused with won-  
dering laugh

To think how changed were all his  
thoughts of fame

Since first he carved the golden epi-  
taph

To keep in memory a worthy name,  
And thought forgetfulness had been its  
doom

But for a few bright letters on a tomb.

The old Astronomer had long since  
died;

The friends of youth were gone and  
far dispersed;

Strange were the domes that rose on  
every side;

Strange fountains on his wondering  
vision burst;

The men of yesterday their business  
plied;

No face was left that he had known  
at first;

And in the city gardens, lo! he  
sees

The saplings that he set are stately  
trees.

Upon the grass beneath their welcome  
shade,

Behold! he marks the fair white  
monument,

And on its face the golden words dis-  
played,

For sixty years their lustre have not  
spent;

He sitteth by it and is not afraid,  
But in its shadow he is well con-  
tent;

And envies not, though bright their  
gleamings are,

The golden letters of the vanished star.

He gazeth up; exceeding bright ap-  
pears

That golden legend to his aged eyes,  
For they are dazzled till they fill with  
tears,

And his lost Youth doth like a vision  
rise;

She saith to him, "In all these toil-  
some years,

What hast thou won by work or en-  
terprise?

What hast thou won to make amends  
to thee,

As thou didst swear to do, for loss of  
me?

"O man! O white-haired man!" the  
vision said,

"Since we two sat beside this monu-  
ment

Life's clearest hues are all evanished,  
The golden wealth thou hadst of me

is spent;

The wind hath swept thy flowers, their  
leaves are shed;

The music is played out that with  
thee went."

"Peace, peace!" he cried; "I lost  
thee, but, in truth,

There are worse losses than the loss of  
youth."

He said not what those losses were —  
but I —

But I must leave them, for the time  
draws near.

Some lose not ONLY joy, but memory  
Of how it felt: not love that was so  
dear

Lose only, but the steadfast certainty  
 That once they had it; doubt comes  
 on, then fear,  
 And after that despondency. I wis  
 The Poet must have meant such loss as  
 this.

But while he sat and pondered on his  
 youth,

He said, "It did one deed that doth  
 remain,  
 For it preserved the memory and the  
 truth

Of her that now doth neither set nor  
 wane,

But shine in all men's thoughts; nor  
 sink forsooth,

And be forgotten like the summer rain.  
 O, it is good that man should not forget  
 Or benefits foregone or brightness set!"

He spoke and said, "My lot contenteth  
 me;

I am right glad for this her worthy  
 fame;

That which was good and great I fain  
 would see

Drawn with a halo round what rests  
 — its name."

This while the Poet said, behold, there  
 came

A workman with his tools anear the  
 tree,

And when he read the words he paused  
 awhile

And pondered on them with a wonder-  
 ing smile.

And then he said, "I pray you, Sir,  
 what mean

The golden letters of this monu-  
 ment?"

In wonder quoth the Poet, "Hast thou  
 been

A dweller near at hand, and their  
 intent

Hast neither heard by voice of fame,  
 nor seen

The marble earlier?" "Ay," said  
 he, and leant

Upon his spade to hear the tale, then  
 sigh,

And say it was a marvel, and pass by.

Then said the Poet, "This is strange  
 to me."

But as he mused, with trouble in his  
 mind,

A band of maids approached him  
 leisurely,

Like vessels sailing with a favoring  
 wind;

And of their rosy lips requested he,  
 As one that for a doubt would solving  
 find,

The tale, if tale there were, of that  
 white stone,

And those fair letters— "While she  
 lived she shone."

Then like a fleet that floats becalmed  
 they stay.

"O, Sir," saith one, "this monu-  
 ment is old;

But we have heard our virtuous mothers  
 say

That by their mothers thus the tale  
 was told:

A Poet made it; journeying then away,  
 He left us; and though some the  
 meaning hold

For other than the ancient one, yet we  
 Receive this legend for a certainty:—

"There was a lily once, most purely  
 white,

Beneath the shadow of these boughs  
 it grew;

Its starry blossom it unclosed by night,  
 And a young Poet loved its shape  
 and hue.

He watched it nightly, 'twas so fair a  
 sight,

Until a stormy wind arose and blew,  
 And when he came once more his  
 flower to greet

Its fallen petals drifted to his feet.

"And for his beautiful white lily's sake,  
 That she might be remembered  
 where her scent

Had been right sweet, he said that he  
 would make

In her dear memory a monument:  
 For she was purer than a driven flake  
 Of snow, and in her grace most ex-  
 cellent;

The loveliest life that death did ever  
mar,  
As beautiful to gaze on as a star."

"I thank you, maid," the Poet answered her,

"And I am glad that I have heard  
your tale."

With that they passed; and as an  
inlander,

Having heard breakers raging in a  
gale

And falling down in thunder, will aver  
That still, when far away in grassy  
vale,

He seems to hear those seething waters  
bound,

So in his ears the maiden's voice did  
sound.

He leaned his face upon his hand, and  
thought

And thought, until a youth came by  
that way;

And once again of him the Poet sought  
The story of the star. But, well-a-  
day!

He said, "The meaning with much  
doubt is fraught,

The sense thereof can no man surely  
say;

For still tradition sways the common  
ear,

That of a truth a star DID DISAPPEAR.

"But they who look beneath the outer  
shell

That wraps the 'kernel of the peo-  
ple's lore,'

Hold THAT for superstition; and they  
tell

That seven lovely sisters dwelt of yore  
In this old city, where it so befell

That one a Poet loved; that, further-  
more,

As stars above us she was pure and  
good,

And fairest of that beauteous sister-  
hood.

"So beautiful they were, those virgins  
seven,

That all men called them clustered  
stars in song,

Forgetful that the stars abide in heaven:  
But woman bideth not beneath it  
long;

For O, alas! alas! one fated even,  
When stars their azure deeps began  
to throng,

That virgin's eyes of Poet loved waxed  
dim,

And all their lustrous shining waned to  
him.

"In summer dusk she drooped her  
head and sighed

Until what time the evening star  
went down,

And all the other stars did shining bide  
Clear in the lustré of their old re-  
nown,

And then—the virgin laid her down  
and died:

Forgot her youth, forgot her beauty's  
crown,

Forgot the sisters whom she loved  
before,

And broke her Poet's heart for ever-  
more."

"A mournful tale, in sooth," the lady  
saith:

"But did he truly grieve for ever-  
more?"

"It may be you forget," he answereth,  
"That this is but a fable at the core

O' the other fable." "Though it be  
but breath,"

She asketh, "was it true?" Then  
he, "This lore,

Since it is fable, either way may go;  
Then, if it please you, think it might  
be so."

"Nay, but," she saith, "if I had told  
your tale,

The virgin should have lived his  
home to bless,

Or, must she die, I would have made  
to fail

His useless love." "I tell you not  
the less,"

He sighs, "because it was of no avail:  
His heart the Poet would not dis-  
possess

Thereof. But let us leave the fable now,  
My Poet heard it with an aching brow."

And he made answer thus: "I thank thee, youth ;

Strange is thy story to these aged ears,  
But I bethink me thou hast told a truth

Under the guise of fable. If my tears,  
Thou lost beloved star, lost now, forsooth,

Indeed could bring thee back among thy peers,

So new thou shouldst be deemed as newly seen,

For men forget that thou hast ever been.

"There was a morning when I longed for fame,

There was a noontide when I passed it by,

There is an evening when I think not shame

Its substance and its being to deny ;  
For if men bear in mind great deeds, the name

Of him that wrought them shall they leave to die ;

Or if his name they shall have deathless writ,

They change the deeds that first ennobled it.

"O golden letters of this monument !

O words to celebrate a loved renown  
Lost now or wrested, and to fancies lent,

Or on a fabled forehead set for crown !

For my departed star, I am content,  
Though legends dim and years her memory drown :

For what were fame to her, compared and set

By this great truth which ye make lustrous yet ?"

"Adieu !" the Poet said, "my vanished star,

Thy duty and thy happiness were one.

Work is heaven's hest ; its fame is sublunar :

The fame thou dost not need — the work is done.

For thee I am content that these things are ;

More than content were I, my race being run,

Might it be true of me, though none thereon

Should muse regretful — 'While he lived he shone.'"

So said, the Poet rose and went his way,

And that same lot he proved whereof he spake.

Madam, my story is told out ; the day  
Draws out her shadows, time doth overtake

The morning. That which endeth call a lay,

Sung after pause — a motto in the break

Between two chapters of a tale not new,  
Nor joyful — but a common tale.  
Adieu !

And that same God who made your face so fair,

And gave your woman's heart its tenderness,

So shield the blessing He implanted there,

That it may never turn to your distress,

And never cost you trouble or despair,  
Nor, granted, leave the granter comfortless ;

But like a river, blest where'er it flows,  
Be still receiving while it still bestows.

Adieu, he said, and paused, while she sat mute

In the soft shadow of the apple-tree ;  
The skylark's song rang like a joyous flute,

The brook went prattling past her restlessly :

She let their tongues be her tongue's substitute ;

It was the wind that sighed, it was not she :

And what the lark, the brook, the wind, had said,

We cannot tell, for none interpreted.

Their counsels might be hard to reconcile,

They might not suit the moment or the spot.

She rose, and laid her work aside the while

Down in the sunshine of that grassy plot ;

She looked upon him with an almost smile,

And held to him a hand that faltered not.

One moment—bird and brook went warbling on,

And the wind sighed again—and he was gone.

So quietly, as if she heard no more  
Or skylark in the azure overhead,  
Or water slipping past the cressy shore,  
Or wind that rose in sighs, and sighing fled—

So quietly, until the alders hoar  
Took him beneath them; till the downward spread

Of planes engulfed him in their leafy seas

She stood beneath her rose-flushed apple-trees.

And then she stooped toward the mossy grass,

And gathered up her work and went her way ;

Straight to that ancient turret she did pass,

And startle back some fawns that were at play.

She did not sigh, she never said "Alas!"

Although he was her friend: but still that day,

Where elm and hornbeam spread a towering dome,

She crossed the dells to her ancestral home.

And did she love him?—what if she did not?

Then home was still the home of happiest years ;

Nor thought was exiled to partake his lot,

Nor heart lost courage through foreboding fears ;

Nor echo did against her secret plot,  
Nor music her betray to painful tears ;

Nor life become a dream, and sunshine dim,

And riches poverty, because of him.

But did she love him?—what and if she did?

Love cannot cool the burning Austral sand,

Nor show the secret waters that lie hid  
In arid valleys of that desert land.

Love has no spells can scorching winds forbid,

Or bring the help which tarries near to hand,

Or spread a cloud for curtaining faded eyes

That gaze up dying into alien skies.

## A DEAD YEAR.

I TOOK a 'year out of my life and story—

A dead year, and said, "I will hew thee a tomb!

'All the kings of the nations lie in glory ;'

Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom ;

Swathed in linen, and precious unguents old ;

Painted with cinnabar, and rich with gold.

"Silent they rest, in solemn salvatory,  
Sealed from the moth and the owl and the flittermouse—

Each with his name on his brow.

'All the kings of the nations lie in glory,

Every one in his own house :'

'Then why not thou?

"Year," I said, "thou shalt not lack  
Bribes to bar thy coming back ;  
Doth old Egypt wear her best  
In the chambers of her rest?

Doth she take to her last bed  
 Beaten gold, and glorious red?  
 Envy not! for thou wilt wear  
 In the dark a shroud as fair;  
 Golden with the sunny ray  
 Thous withdrawest from my day;  
 Wrought upon with colors fine  
 Stolen from this life of mine:  
 Like the dusty Libyan kings,  
 Lie with two wide-open wings  
 On thy breast, as if to say,  
 On these wings hope flew away;  
 And so housed, and thus adorned,  
 Not forgotten, but not scorned,  
 Let the dark for evermore  
 Close thee when I close the door;  
 And the dust for ages fall  
 In the creases of thy pall;  
 And no voice nor visit rude  
 Break thy sealèd solitude."

I took the year out of my life and  
 story,  
 The dead year, and said, "I have  
 hewed thee a tomb!  
 'All the kings of the nations lie in  
 glory,'  
 Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred  
 gloom;  
 But for the sword, and the sceptre, and  
 diadem,  
 Sure thou didst reign like them."  
 So I laid her with those tyrants old and  
 hoary,

According to my vow;  
 For I said, "The kings of the nations  
 lie in glory,  
 And so shalt thou!"

"Rock," I said, "thy ribs are strong,  
 That I bring thee guard it long;  
 Hide the light from buried eyes—  
 Hide it, lest the dead arise."  
 "Year," I said, and turned away,  
 "I am free of thee this day;  
 All that we two only know,  
 I forgive and I forego,  
 So thy face no more I meet  
 In the field or in the street."

Thus we parted, she and I;  
 Life hid death, and put it by;  
 Life hid death, and said, "Be free!  
 I have no more need of thee."

No more need! O mad mistake,  
 With repentance in its wake!  
 Ignorant, and rash, and blind,  
 Life had left the grave behind;  
 But had locked within its hold,  
 With the spices and the gold,  
 All she had to keep her warm  
 In the raging of the storm.

Scarce the sunset bloom was gone,  
 And the little stars outshone,  
 Ere the dead year, stiff and stark,  
 Drew me to her in the dark;  
 Death drew life to come to her,  
 Beating at her sepulchre,  
 Crying out, "How can I part  
 With the best share of my heart?  
 Lo, it lies upon the bier,  
 Captive, with the buried year.  
 O my heart!" And I fell prone,  
 Weeping at the sealèd stone;  
 "Year among the shades," I said,  
 "Since I live, and thou art dead,  
 Let my captive heart be free  
 Like a bird to fly to me."  
 And I stayed some voice to win,  
 But none answered from within;  
 And I kissed the door—and night  
 Deepened till the stars waxed bright;  
 And I saw them set and wane,  
 And the world turned green again.

"So," I whispered, "open door,  
 I must tread this palace floor—  
 Sealèd palace, rich and dim.  
 Let a narrow sunbeam swim  
 After me, and on me spread  
 While I look upon my dead;  
 Let a little warmth be free  
 To come after; let me see  
 Through the doorway, when I sit  
 Looking out, the swallows flit,  
 Settling not till daylight goes;  
 Let me smell the wild white rose,  
 Smell the woodbine and the may;  
 Mark, upon a sunny day,  
 Sated from their blossoms rise  
 Honey-bees and butterflies.  
 Let me hear, O! let me hear,  
 Sitting by my buried year,  
 Finches chirping to their young,  
 And the little noises flung  
 Out of clefts where rabbits play,  
 Or from falling water-spray;

And the gracious echoes woke  
 By man's work : the woodman's stroke,  
 Shout of shepherd, whistlings blithe,  
 And the whetting of the scythe ;  
 Let this be, lest, shut and furled  
 From the well-beloved world,  
 I forget her yearnings old,  
 And her troubles manifold,  
 Strivings sore, submissions meet,  
 And my pulse no longer beat,  
 Keeping time and bearing part  
 With the pulse of her great heart.

"So! swing open, door, and shade  
 Take me: I am not afraid,  
 For the time will not be long;  
 Soon I shall have waxen strong —  
 Strong enough my own to win  
 From the grave it lies within."

And I entered. On her bier  
 Quiet lay the buried year;  
 I sat down where I could see  
 Life without and sunshine free,  
 Death within. And I between,  
 Waited my own heart to wean  
 From the shroud that shaded her  
 In the rock-hewn sepulchre —  
 Waited till the dead should say,  
 "Heart, be free of me this day" —  
 Waited with a patient will —  
 AND I WAIT BETWEEN THEM STILL.

I take the year back to my life and  
 story,  
 The dead year, and say, "I will share  
 in thy tomb.

'All the kings of the nations lie in  
 glory ;'  
 Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred  
 gloom!

They reigned in their lifetime with  
 sceptre and diadem,

But thou excellest them;  
 For life doth make thy grave her ora-  
 tory,

And the crown is still on thy brow;  
 'All the kings of the nations lie in  
 glory,'  
 And so dost thou."

## REFLECTIONS

*Written for the Portfolio Society,  
 July, 1862.*

LOOKING OVER A GATE AT A POOL IN  
 A FIELD.

WHAT change has made the pastures  
 sweet  
 And reached the daisies at my feet,  
 And cloud that wears a golden hem?  
 This lovely world, the hills, the  
 sward —  
 They all look fresh, as if our Lord  
 But-yesterday had finished them.

And here's the field with light aglow;  
 How fresh its boundary lime-trees  
 show,  
 And how its wet leaves trembling  
 shine!

Between their trunks come through to  
 me  
 The morning sparkles of the sea  
 Below the level browsing line.

I see the pool more clear by half  
 Than pools where other waters laugh  
 Up at the breasts of coot and rail.  
 There, as she passed it on her way,  
 I saw reflected yesterday  
 A maiden with a milking-pail.

There, neither slowly nor in haste,  
 One hand upon her slender waist,  
 The other lifted to her pail,  
 She, rosy in the morning light,  
 Among the water-daisies white,  
 Like some fair sloop appeared to sail.

Against her ankles as she trod  
 The lucky buttercups did nod.

I leaned upon the gate to see:  
 The sweet thing looked, but did not  
 speak;

A dimple came in either cheek,  
 And all my heart was gone from me.

Then, as I lingered on the gate,  
 And she came up like coming fate,  
 I saw my picture in her eyes —

Clear dancing eyes, more black than  
sloes,  
Cheeks like the mountain pink, that  
grows  
Among white-headed majesties.

I said, "A tale was made of old  
That I would fain to thee unfold;  
Ah! let me — let me tell the tale."  
But high she held her comely head;  
"I cannot heed it now," she said,  
"For carrying of the milking-pail."

She laughed. What good to make  
ado?

I held the gate, and she came through,  
And took her homeward path anon.  
From the clear pool her face had fled;  
It rested on my heart instead,  
Reflected when the maid was gone.

With happy youth, and work content,  
So sweet and stately on she went,  
Right careless of the untold tale.  
Each step she took I loved her more,  
And followed to her dairy door  
The maiden with the milking-pail.

## II.

For hearts where wakened love doth  
lurk,  
How fine, how blest a thing is work!  
For work does good when reasons  
fail —  
Good; yet the axe at every stroke  
The echo of a name awoke —  
Her name is Mary Martindale.

I'm glad that echo was not heard  
Aright by other men: a bird  
Knows doubtless what his own notes  
tell;  
And I know not; but I can say  
I felt as shame-faced all that day  
As if folks heard her name right  
well.

And when the west began to glow  
I went — I could not choose but go —  
To that same dairy on the hill;  
And while sweet Mary moved about  
Within, I came to her without,  
And leaned upon the window-sill.

The garden border where I stood  
Was sweet with pinks and southern-  
wood.

I spoke — her answer seemed to  
fail;  
I smelt the pinks — I could not see;  
The dusk came down and sheltered  
me,  
And in the dusk she heard my tale.

And what is left that I should tell?  
I begged a kiss, I pleaded well:  
The rosebud lips did long decline;  
But yet I think, I think 't is true,  
That, leaned at last into the dew,  
One little instant they were mine.

O life! how dear thou hast become:  
She laughed at dawn, and I was dumb,  
But evening counsels best prevail.  
Fair shine the blue that o'er her  
spreads,  
Green be the pastures where she treads,  
The maiden with the milking-pail!

## THE LETTER L.

## ABSENT.

We sat on grassy slopes that meet  
With sudden dip the level strand;  
The trees hung overhead — our feet  
Were on the sand.

Two silent girls, a thoughtful man,  
We sunned ourselves in open light,  
And felt such April airs as fan  
The Isle of Wight;

And smelt the wall-flower in the crag  
Whereon that dainty waft had fed,  
Which made the bell-hung cowslip  
wag  
Her delicate head;

And let alighting jackdaws fleet  
Adown it open-winged, and pass  
Till they could touch with outstretched  
feet  
The warmed grass.



The happy wave ran up and rang  
Like service bells a long way off,  
And down a little freshet sprang  
From mossy trough,

And splashed into a rain of spray,  
And fretted on with daylight's loss,  
Because so many blue-bells lay  
Leaning across.

Blue martins gossiped in the sun,  
And pairs of chattering daws flew  
by,  
And sailing brigs rocked softly on  
In company.

Wild cherry boughs above us spread  
The whitest shade was ever seen,  
And flicker, flicker, came and fled  
Sun-spots between.

Bees murmured in the milk-white  
bloom  
As babes will sigh for deep content  
When their sweet hearts for peace  
make room,  
As given, not lent.

And we saw on : we said no word,  
And one was lost in musings rare,  
One buoyant as the waft that stirred  
Her shining hair.

His eyes were bent upon the sand,  
Unfathomed deeps within them lay ;  
A slender rod was in his hand —  
A hazel spray.

Her eyes were resting on his face,  
As shyly glad by stealth to glean  
Impressions of his manly grace  
And guarded mien ;

The mouth with steady sweetness set,  
And eyes conveying unaware  
The distant hint of some regret  
That harbored there.

She gazed, and in the tender flush  
That made her face like roses blown,  
And in the radiance and the hush,  
Her thought was shown.

It was a happy thing to sit  
So near, nor mar his reverie ;  
She looked not for a part in it,  
So meek was she.

But it was solace for her eyes,  
And for her heart, that yearned to  
him,  
To watch apart in loving wise  
Those musings dim.

Lost — lost, and gone ! The Pelham  
woods  
Were full of doves that cooed at  
ease ;  
The orchis filled her purple hoods  
For dainty bees.

He heard not ; all the delicate air  
Was fresh with falling water-spray :  
It mattered not — he was not there,  
But far away.

Till with the hazel in his hand,  
Still drowned in thought, it thus  
befell ;  
He drew a letter on the sand —  
The letter L.

And looking on it, straight there  
wrought  
A ruddy flush about his brow ;  
His letter woke him : absent thought  
Rushed homeward now.

And, half-abashed, his hasty touch  
Effaced it with a tell-tale care,  
As if his action had been much,  
And not his air.

And she? she watched his open palm  
Smooth out the letter from the sand,  
And rose, with aspect almost calm,  
And filled her hand

With cherry bloom, and moved away  
To gather wild forget-me-not,  
And let her errant footsteps stray  
To one sweet spot,

As if she coveted the fair  
White lining of the silver weed,  
And cuckoo-pint that shaded there  
Empurpled seed.

She had not feared, as I divine,  
 Because she had not hoped. Alas!  
 The sorrow of it! for that sign  
 Came but to pass;

And yet it robbed her of the right  
 To give, who looked not to receive,  
 And made her blush in love's despite  
 That she should grieve.

A shape in white, she turned to gaze;  
 Her eyes were shaded with her hand,  
 And half-way up the winding ways  
 We saw her stand.

Green hollows of the fringed cliff,  
 Red rocks that under waters show,  
 Blue reaches, and a sailing skiff,  
 Were spread below.

She stood to gaze, perhaps to sigh,  
 Perhaps to think; but who can tell  
 How heavy on her heart must lie  
 The letter L!

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She came anon with quiet grace;  
 And "What," she murmured, "silent yet!"  
 He answered, "'T is a haunted place,  
 And spell-beset.

"O speak to us, and break the spell!"  
 "The spell is broken," she replied.  
 "I crossed the running brook, it fell,  
 It could not bide.

"And I have brought a budding world  
 Of orchis spires and daisies rank,  
 And ferny plumes but half uncurled,  
 From yonder bank;

"And I shall weave of them a crown,  
 And at the well-head launch it free,  
 That so the brook may float it down,  
 And out to sea.

"There may it to some English hands  
 From fairy meadow seem to come;  
 The fairest of fairy lands—  
 The land of home."

"Weave on," he said, and as she wove  
 We told how currents in the deep,  
 With branches from a lemon grove,  
 Blue bergs will sweep.

And messages from shipwrecked folk  
 Will navigate the moon-led main,  
 And painted boards of splintered oak  
 Their port regain.

Then floated out by vagrant thought,  
 My soul beheld on torrid sand  
 The wasteful water set at nought  
 Man's skilful hand,

And suck out gold-dust from the box,  
 And wash it down in weedy whirls,  
 And split the wine-keg on the rocks,  
 And lose the pearls.

"Ah! why to that which needs it not,"  
 Methought, "should costly things be  
 given?  
 How much is wasted, wrecked, forgot,  
 On this side heaven!"

So musing, did mine ears awake  
 To maiden tones of sweet reserve,  
 And manly speech that seemed to make  
 The steady curve

Of lips that uttered it defer  
 Their guard, and soften for the  
 thought:  
 She listened, and his talk with her  
 Was fancy fraught.

"There is not much in liberty"—  
 With doubtful pauses he began;  
 And said to her and said to me,  
 "There was a man—

"There was a man who dreamed one  
 night  
 That his dead father came to him,  
 And said, when fire was low, and light  
 Was burning dim—

"Why vagrant thus, my sometime  
 pride,  
 Unloved, unloving, wilt thou roam?  
 Sure home is best!" The son replied,  
 'I have no home.'

“‘Shall not I speak?’ his father said,  
 ‘Who early chose a youthful wife,  
 And worked for her, and with her led  
 My happy life.

“‘Ay, I will speak, for I was young  
 As thou art now, when I did hold  
 The prattling sweetness of thy tongue  
 Dearer than gold;

“‘And rosy from thy noonday sleep  
 Would bear thee to admiring kin,  
 And all thy pretty looks would keep  
 My heart within.

“‘Then after, ’mid thy young allies —  
 For thee ambition flushed my brow —  
 I coveted the schoolboy prize  
 Far more than thou.

“‘I thought for thee, I thought for all  
 My gamesome imps that round me  
 grew;  
 The dews of blessing heaviest fall  
 Where care falls too.

“‘And I that sent my boys away,  
 In youthful strength to earn their  
 bread,  
 And died before the hair was grey  
 Upon my head —

“‘I say to thee, though free from care,  
 A lonely lot, an aimless life,  
 The crowning comfort is not there —  
 Son, take a wife.’

“‘Father beloved,’ the son replied,  
 And failed to gather to his breast,  
 With arms in darkness searching wide,  
 The formless guest.

“‘I am but free, as sorrow is,  
 To dry her tears, to laugh, to talk;  
 And free, as sick men are, I wis,  
 To rise and walk.

“‘And free, as poor men are, to buy  
 If they have nought wherewith to  
 pay;  
 Nor hope the debt, before they die,  
 To wipe away.

“‘What ’vails it there are wives to win,  
 And faithful hearts for those to yearn,  
 Who find not aught thereto akin  
 To make return?

“‘Shall he take much who little gives,  
 And dwells in spirit far away,  
 When she that in his presence lives,  
 Doth never stray,

“‘But, waking, guideth as beseems  
 The happy house in order trim,  
 And tends her babes; and, sleeping,  
 dreams  
 Of them and him?

“‘O base, O cold,’ — while thus he  
 spake  
 The dream broke off, the vision fled;  
 He carried on his speech awake,  
 And sighing said —

“‘I had — ah, happy man! — I had  
 A precious jewel in my breast,  
 And while I kept it I was glad  
 At work, at rest!

“‘Call it a heart, and call it strong  
 As upward stroke of eagle’s wing;  
 Then call it weak, you shall not wrong  
 The beating thing.

“‘In tangles of the jungle reed,  
 Whose heats are lit with tiger eyes,  
 In shipwreck drifting with the weed  
 ’Neath rainy skies,

“‘Still youthful manhood, fresh and  
 keen,  
 At danger gazed with awed delight,  
 As if sea would not drown, I ween,  
 Nor serpent bite.

“‘I had — ah, happy! but ’tis gone,  
 The priceless jewel; one came by,  
 And saw and stood awhile to con  
 With curious eye,

“‘And wished for it, and faintly smiled  
 From under lashes black as doom,  
 With subtle sweetness, tender, mild,  
 That did illume

"The perfect face, and shed on it  
A charm, half feeling, half surprise,  
And brim with dreams the exquisite  
Brown blessed eyes.

"Was it for this, no more but this,  
I took and laid it in her hand,  
By dimples ruled, to hint submiss,  
By frown unmanned?

"It was for this — and O farewell  
The fearless foot, the present mind,  
And steady will to breast the swell  
And face the wind!

"I gave the jewel from my breast,  
She played with it a little while  
As I sailed down into the west,  
Fed by her smile;

"Then weary of it — far from land,  
With sigh as deep as destiny,  
She let it drop from her fair hand  
Into the sea,

"And watched it sink; and I — and  
I, —  
What shall I do, for all is vain?  
No wave will bring, no gold will buy,  
No toil attain;

"Nor any diver reach to raise  
My jewel from the blue abyss;  
Or could they, still I should but praise  
Their work amiss.

"Thrown, thrown away! But I love  
yet  
The fair, fair hand which did the  
deed:  
That wayward sweetness to forget  
Were bitter meed.

"No, let it lie, and let the wave  
Roll over it for evermore;  
Whelmed where the sailor hath his  
grave —  
The sea her store.

"My heart, my sometime happy  
heart!  
And O for once let me complain,  
I must forego life's better part —  
Man's dearer gain.

"I worked afar that I might rear  
A peaceful home on English soil;  
I labored for the gold and gear —  
I loved my toil.

"For ever in my spirit spake  
The natural whisper, "Well 'twill be  
When loving wife and children break  
Their bread with thee!"

"The gathered gold is turned to dross,  
The wife hath faded into air,  
My heart is thrown away, my loss  
I cannot spare.

"Not spare unsated thought her  
food —  
No, not one rustle of the fold,  
Nor scent of eastern sandalwood,  
Nor gleam of gold;

"Nor quaint devices of the shawl,  
Far less the drooping lashes meek;  
The gracious figure, lithe and tall,  
The dimpled cheek;

"And all the wonders of her eyes,  
And sweet caprices of her air,  
Albeit, indignant reason cries,  
Fool! have a care.

"Fool! join not madness to mistake;  
Thou knowest she loved thee not a  
whit;  
Only that she thy heart might break —  
She wanted it,

"Only the conquered thing to chain  
So fast that none might set it free,  
Nor other woman there might reign  
And comfort thee.

"Robbed, robbed of life's illusions  
sweet;  
Love dead outside her closed door,  
And passion fainting at her feet  
To wake no more;

"What canst thou give that unknown  
bride  
Whom thou didst work for in the  
waste,  
Ere fated love was born, and cried —  
Was dead, ungraced?

"No more but this, the partial care,  
The natural kindness for its own,  
The trust that waxeth unaware,  
As worth is known:

"Observance, and complacent thought  
Indulgent, and the honor due  
That many another man has brought  
Who brought love too.

"Nay, then, forbid it, Heaven!' he  
said,  
'The saintly vision fades from me;  
O bands and chains! I cannot wed —  
I am not free.'"

With that he raised his face to view;  
"What think you," asking, "of my  
tale?  
And was he right to let the dew  
Of morn exhale,

"And burdened in the noontide sun,  
The grateful shade of home forego —  
Could he be right — I ask as one  
Who fain would know?"

He spoke to her and spoke to me;  
The rebel rose-hue dyed her cheek;  
The woven crown lay on her knee;  
She would not speak.

And I with doubtful pause — averse  
To let occasion drift away —  
I answered — "If his case were worse  
Than word can say,

"Time is a healer of sick hearts,  
And women have been known to  
choose,  
With purpose to allay their smarts,  
And tend their bruise,

"These for themselves. Content to  
give,  
In their own lavish love complete,  
Taking for sole prerogative  
Their tendance sweet.

"Such meeting in their diadem  
Of crowning love's ethereal fire,  
Himself he robs who robbeth them  
Of their desire.

"Therefore the man who, dreaming,  
cried  
Against his lot that evensong,  
I judge him honest, and decide  
That he was wrong."

"When I am judged, ah, may my fate,"  
He whispered, "in thy code be read!  
Be thou both judge and advocate."  
Then turned, he said —

"Fair weaver!" touching, while he  
spoke,  
The woven crown, the weaving hand,  
"And do you this decree revoke,  
Or may it stand?

"This friend, you ever think her  
right —  
She is not wrong, then?" Soft and  
low  
The little trembling word took flight:  
She answered, "No."

---

PRESENT.

A meadow where the grass was deep,  
Rich, square, and golden to the view,  
A belt of elms with level sweep  
About it grew.

The sun beat down on it, the line  
Of shade was clear beneath the trees;  
There, by a clustering eglantine,  
We sat at ease.

And O the buttercups! that field  
O' the cloth of gold, where pennons  
swam —  
Where France set up his liliated shield,  
His oriflamb,

And Henry's lion-standard rolled:  
What was it to their matchless sheen,  
Their million million drops of gold  
Among the green!

We sat at ease in peaceful trust,  
For he had written, "Let us meet;  
My wife grew tired of smoke and dust,  
And London heat,

"And I have found a quiet grange,  
Set back in meadows sloping west,  
And there our little ones can range  
And she can rest.

"Come down, that we may show the  
view,  
And she may hear your voice again,  
And talk her woman's talk with you  
Along the lane."

Since he had drawn with listless hand  
The letter, six long years had fled,  
And winds had blown about the sand,  
And they were wed.

Two rosy urchins near him played,  
Or watched, entranced, the shapely  
ships  
That with his knife for them he made  
Of elder slips.

And where the flowers were thickest  
shed,  
Each blossom like a burnished gem,  
A creeping baby reared its head,  
And cooed at them.

And calm was on the father's face,  
And love was in the mother's eyes;  
She looked and listened from her place,  
In tender wise.

She did not need to raise her voice  
That they might hear, she sat so nigh;  
Yet we could speak when 'twas our  
choice,  
And soft reply.

Holding our quiet talk apart  
Of household things; till, all unsealed,  
The guarded outworks of the heart  
Began to yield;

And much that prudence will not dip  
The pen to fix and send away,  
Passed safely over from the lip  
That summer day.

"I should be happy," with a look  
Towards her husband where he lay,  
Lost in the pages of his book,  
Soft did she say;

"I am, and yet no lot below  
For one whole day eludeth care;  
To marriage all the stories flow,  
And finish there:

"As if with marriage came the end,  
The entrance into settled rest,  
The calm to which love's tossings tend,  
The quiet breast.

"For me love played the low preludes,  
Yet life began but with the ring,  
Such infinite solitudes  
Around it cling.

"I did not for my heart divine  
Her destiny so meek to grow;  
The higher nature matched with mine  
Will have it so.

"Still I consider it, and still  
Acknowledge it my master made,  
Above me by the steadier will  
Of nought afraid.

"Above me by the candid speech;  
The temperate judgment of its own;  
The keener thoughts that grasp and  
reach  
At things unknown.

"But I look up and he looks down,  
And thus our married eyes can meet;  
Unclouded his, and clear of frown,  
And gravely sweet.

"And yet, O good, O wise and true!  
I would for all my fealty,  
That I could be as much to you  
As you to me;

"And knew the deep secure content  
Of wives who have been hardly won.  
And, long petitioned, gave assent,  
Jealous of none.

"But proudly sure in all the earth  
No other in that homage shares,  
Nor other woman's face or worth  
Is prized as theirs."

I said: "*And yet no lot below  
For one whole day eludeth care.*  
Your thought." She answered, "Even  
so.  
I would beware

"Regretful questionings; be sure  
That very seldom do they rise,  
Nor for myself do I endure—  
I sympathize.

"For once"—she turned away her  
head,  
Across the grass she swept her  
hand—

"There was a letter once," she said,  
"Upon the sand."

"There was, in truth, a letter writ  
On sand," I said, "and swept from  
view;  
But that same hand which fashioned it  
Is given to you.

"Efface the letter; wherefore keep  
An image which the sands forego?"  
"Albeit that fear had seemed to sleep,"  
She answered low,

"I could not choose but wake it now;  
For do but turn aside your face,  
A house on yonder hilly brow  
Your eyes may trace.

"The chestnut shelters it; ah me,  
That I should have so faint a heart!  
But yester eve, as by the sea  
I sat apart,

"I heard a name, I saw a hand  
Of passing stranger point that way—  
And will he meet her on the strand,  
When late we stray?

"For she is come, for she is there,  
I heard it in the dusk, and heard  
Admiring words, that named her fair,  
But little stirred

"By beauty of the wood and wave,  
And weary of an old man's sway!  
For it was sweeter to enslave  
Than to obey."

—The voice of one that near us stood,  
The rustle of a silken fold,  
A scent of eastern sandalwood,  
A gleam of gold!

A lady! In the narrow space  
Between the husband and the wife,  
But nearest him—she showed a face  
With dangers rife;

A subtle smile that dimpling fled,  
As night-black lashes rose and fell:  
I looked, and to myself I said,  
"The letter L."

He, too, looked up, and with arrest  
Of breath and motion held his gaze,  
Nor cared to hide within his breast  
His deep amaze;

Nor spoke till on her near advance  
His dark cheek flushed a ruddier hue;  
And with his change of countenance  
Hers altered too.

"Lenore!" his voice was like the cry  
Of one entreating; and he said  
But that—then paused with such a  
sigh  
As mourns the dead.

And seated near, with no demur  
Of bashful doubt the silence broke,  
Though I alone could answer her  
When first she spoke.

She looked: her eyes were beauty's  
own;  
She shed their sweetness into his;  
Nor spared the married wife one moan  
That bitterest is.

She spoke, and, lo, her loveliness  
Methought she damaged with her  
tongue;  
And every sentence made it less,  
So false they rung.

The rallying voice, the light demand,  
Half flippant, half unsatisfied;  
The vanity sincere and bland—  
The answers wide.

And now her talk was of the East,  
And next her talk was of the sea ;  
"And has the love for it increased  
You shared with me ?"

He answered not, but grave and still  
With earnest eyes her face perused,  
And locked his lips with steady will,  
As one that mused —

That mused and wondered. Why his  
gaze  
Should dwell on her, methought, was  
plain ;  
But reason that should wonder raise  
I sought in vain.

And near and near the children drew,  
Attracted by her rich array,  
And gems that trembling into view  
Like raindrops lay.

He spoke : the wife her baby took  
And pressed the little face to hers ;  
What pain so'er her bosom shook,  
What jealous stirs

Might stab her heart, she hid them so,  
The cooing babe a veil supplied ;  
And if she listened none might know,  
Or if she sighed ;

Or if, forecasting grief and care,  
Unconscious solace thence she drew,  
And lulled her babe, and unaware  
Lulled sorrow too.

The lady, she interpreter  
For looks or language wanted none,  
If yet dominion stayed with her —  
So lightly won :

If yet the heart she wounded sore  
Could yearn to her, and let her see  
The homage that was evermore  
Disloyalty ;

If sign would yield that it had bled,  
Or rallied from the faithless blow,  
Or sick or sullen stooped to wed,  
She craved to know.

Now dreamy deep, now sweetly keen,  
Her asking eyes would round him  
shine ;  
But guarded lips and settled mien  
Refused the sign.

And unbeguiled and unbetrayed,  
The wonder yet within his breast,  
It seemed a watchful part he played  
Against her quest.

Until with accent of regret  
She touched upon the past once  
more,  
As if she dared him to forget  
His dream of yore.

And words of little weight let fall  
The fancy of the lower mind ;  
How waxing life must needs leave all  
Its best behind ;

How he had said that "he would fain  
(One morning on the halcyon sea)  
That life would at a stand remain  
Eternally ;

"And sails be mirrored in the deep,  
As then they were, for evermore,  
And happy spirits wake and sleep  
Afar from shore :

"The well-contented heart be fed  
Ever as then, and all the world  
(It were not small) unshadowed  
When sails were furled.

"Your words" — a pause, and quietly  
With touch of calm self-ridicule :  
"It may be so — for then," said he,  
"I was a fool."

With that he took his book, and left  
An awkward silence to my care,  
That soon I filled with questions deft  
And debonair ;

And slid into an easy vein,  
The favorite picture of the year ;  
The grouse upon her lord's domain —  
The salmon weir ;



Till she could feign a sudden thought  
Upon neglected guests, and rise  
And make us her adieux, with nought  
In her dark eyes

Acknowledging or shame or pain ;  
But just unveiling for our view  
A little smile of still disdain  
As she withdrew.

Then nearer did the sunshine creep,  
And warmer came the wafting  
breeze ;  
The little babe was fast asleep  
On mother's knees.

Fair was the face that o'er it leant,  
The cheeks with beauteous blushes  
dyed ;  
The downcast lashes, shyly bent,  
That failed to hide

Some tender shame. She did not see ;  
She felt his eyes that would not stir ;  
She looked upon her babe, and he  
So looked at her.

So grave, so wondering, so content,  
As one new waked to conscious life,  
Whose sudden joy with fear is blent,  
He said, "My wife."

"My wife, how beautiful you are !"  
Then closer at her side reclined ;  
"The bold brown woman from afar  
Comes, to me blind.

"And by comparison I see  
The majesty of matron grace,  
And learn how pure, how fair can be  
My own wife's face :

"Pure with all faithful passion, fair  
With tender smiles that come and  
go ;  
And comforting as April air  
After the snow.

"Fool that I was ! my spirit frets  
And marvels at the humbling truth,  
That I have deigned to spend regrets  
On my bruised youth.

"Its idol mocked thee, seated nigh,  
And shamed me for the mad mis-  
take ;  
I thank my God He could deny,  
And she forsake.

"Ah, who am I, that God hath saved  
Me from the doom I did desire,  
And crossed the lot myself had craved,  
To set me higher ?

"What have I done that He should  
bow  
From heaven to choose a wife for  
me ?  
And what deserved, he should endow  
My home with THEE ?

"My wife !" With that she turned  
her face  
To kiss the hand about her neck ;  
And I went down and sought the place  
Where leaped the beck —

The busy beck, that still would run  
And fall, and falter its refrain ;  
And pause and shimmer in the sun,  
And fall again.

It led me to the sandy shore,  
We sang together, it and I —  
"The daylight comes, the dark is o'er,  
The shadows fly."

I lost it on the sandy shore,  
"O wife !" its latest murmurs fell,  
"O wife, be glad, and fear no more  
The letter L."

## THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE.

(1571.)

THE old mayor climbed the belfry  
tower,  
The ringers ran by two, by three ;  
"Pull, if ye never pulled before ;  
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth  
he.

"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston  
bells!  
Ply all your changes, all your swells,  
Play uppe 'The Brides of Ender-  
by.'"

Men say it was a stolen tyde —  
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;  
But in myne ears doth still abide  
The message that the bells let fall:  
And there was nought of strange, be-  
side  
The flight of mews and peewits pied  
By millions crouched on the old sea  
wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,  
My thread brake off, I raised myne  
eyes;

The level sun, like ruddy ore,  
Lay sinking in the barren skies;  
And dark against day's golden death  
She moved where Lindis wandereth,  
My sohne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,  
Ere the early dews were falling,  
Farre away I heard her song,  
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along;  
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,  
Floweth, floweth,  
From the meads where melick groweth  
Faintly came her milking song —

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,  
"For the dews will soone be falling;  
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,  
Mellow, mellow;  
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;  
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe,  
Lightfoot;  
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,  
Hollow, hollow;  
Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,  
From the clovers lift your head;  
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe,  
Lightfoot,  
Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,  
Jetty, to the milking shed."

If it be long, ay, long ago,  
When I beginne to think howe long,  
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,  
Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong;

And all the aire, it seemeth mee,  
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),  
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,  
And not a shadowe mote be seene,  
Save where full fyve good miles away  
The steeple towered from out the  
greene;  
And lo! the great bell farre and wide  
Was heard in all the country side  
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are  
Moved on in sunset's golden breath,  
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,  
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;  
Till floating o'er the grassy sea  
Came downe that kyndly message free,  
The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked uppe into the sky,  
And all along where Lindis flows  
To where the goodly vessels lie,  
And where the lordly steeple shows.  
They sayde, "And why should this  
thing be?  
What danger lowers by land or sea?  
They ring the tune of Enderby!

"For evil news from Mablethorpe,  
Of pyrate galleys warping down;  
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,  
They have not spared to wake the  
towne:  
But while the west bin red to see,  
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,  
Why ring 'The Brides of Enderby'?"

I looked without, and lo! my sonne  
Came riding downe with might and  
main:  
He raised a shout as he drew on,  
Till all the welkin rang again,  
"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"  
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath  
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

"The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,  
The rising tide comes on apace,  
And boats adrift in yonder towne  
Go sailing uppe the market-place."

He shook as one that looks on death :  
 "God save you, mother!" straight he  
   saith ;  
 "Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds her  
   way, [long ;  
   With her two bairns I marked her  
 And ere yon bells beganne to play  
   Afar I heard her milking song."  
 He looked across the grassy lea,  
 To right, to left, "Ho, Enderby!"  
 They rang "The Brides of Enderby!"

With that he cried and beat his breast ;  
   For, lo! along the river's bed  
 A mighty eygre reared his crest,  
   And uppe the Lindis raging sped.  
 It swept with thunderous noises loud ;  
 Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,  
 Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed  
   Shook all her trembling bankes  
   amaine ;  
 Then madly at the eygre's breast  
   Flung uppe her weltering walls again.  
 Then bankes came downe with ruin and  
   rout —  
 Then beaten foam flew round about —  
 Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,  
   The heart had hardly time to beat  
 Before a shallow seething wave  
   Sobbed in the grasses at our feet :  
 The feet had hardly time to flee  
 Before it brake against the knee,  
 And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,  
   The noise of bells went sweeping by ;  
 I marked the lofty beacon light  
   Stream from the church tower, red  
   and high —  
 A lurid mark and dread to see ;  
 And awsome bells they were to mee,  
 That in the dark rang "Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide  
   From roofe to roofe who fearless  
   rowed ;  
 And I — my sonne was at my side,  
   And yet the ruddy beacon glowed ;

And yet he moaned beneath his breath,  
 "O come in life, or come in death!  
 O lost! my love, Elizabeth."

And didst thou visit him no more?  
   Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter  
   deare ;  
 The waters laid thee at his doore,  
   Ere yet the early dawn was clear.  
 Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,  
 The lifted sun shone on thy face,  
 Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the  
   grass,  
   That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea ;  
 A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!  
   To manye more than myne and mee :  
 But each will mourn his own (she saith) ;  
 And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath  
 Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more  
 By the reedy Lindis shore,  
 "Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,  
 Ere the early dewes be falling ;  
 I shall never hear her song,  
 "Cusha! Cusha!" all along  
 Where the sunny Lindis floweth,  
   Goeth, floweth ; [eth,  
 From the meads where melick grow-  
 When the water winding down,  
 Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more  
 Where the reeds and rushes quiver,  
   Shiver, quiver ;  
 Stand beside the sobbing river,  
 Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling  
 To the sandy lonesome shore ;  
 I shall never hear her calling,  
 "Leave your meadow grasses mellow,  
   Mellow, mellow ;  
 Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow ;  
 Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe,  
   Lightfoot ;  
 Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,  
   Hollow, hollow ;  
 Come uppe, Lightfoot, rise and fol-  
   low ;  
   Lightfoot, Whitefoot,  
 From your clovers lift the head ;  
 Come uppe, Jetty, follow, follow,  
 Jetty, to the milking shed."

AFTERNOON AT A PARSON-  
AGE.(THE PARSON'S BROTHER, SISTER, AND  
TWO CHILDREN.)*Preface.*

WHAT wonder man should fail to stay  
A nursling wafted from above,  
The growth celestial come astray,  
That tender growth whose name is  
Love!

It is as if high winds in heaven  
Had shaken the celestial trees,  
And to this earth below had given  
Some feathered seeds from one of  
these.

O perfect love that 'dureth long!  
Dear growth, that, shaded by the  
palms,  
And breathed on by the angel's song,  
Blooms on in heaven's eternal calms!

How great the task to guard thee here,  
Where wind is rough, and frost is  
keen,  
And all the ground with doubt and fear  
Is chequered birth and death be-  
tween!

Space is against thee—it can part;  
Time is against thee—it can chill;  
Words—they but render half the  
heart;  
Deeds—they are poor to our rich  
will.

*Merton.* Though she had loved me, I  
had never bound  
Her beauty to my darkness; that had  
been  
Too hard for her. Sadder to look so  
near  
Into a face all shadow, than to stand  
Aloof, and then withdraw, and after-  
wards  
Suffer forgetfulness to comfort her.

I think so, and I loved her; therefore I  
Have no complaint; albeit she is not  
mine:

And yet—and yet, withdrawing I would  
fain

She would have pleaded duty—would  
have said

“My father wills it;” would have  
turned away,

As lingering, or unwillingly; for then  
She would have done no damage to  
the past:

Now she has roughly used it—flung it  
down

And brushed its bloom away. If she  
had said,

“Sir, I have promised; therefore, lo!  
my hand”—

Would I have taken it? Ah, no! by all  
Most sacred, no!

I would for my sole share  
Have taken first her recollected blush  
The day I won her; next her shining  
tears—

The tears of our long parting; and for all  
The rest—her cry, her bitter heart-  
sick cry,

That day or night (I know not which  
it was,

The days being always night), that  
darkest night,

When being led to her I heard her cry,  
“O blind! blind! blind!”

Go with thy chosen mate:  
The fashion of thy going nearly cured  
The sorrow of it. I am yet so weak  
That half my thoughts go after thee;  
but not

So weak that I desire to have it so.

*JESSIE, seated at the piano, sings.*

When the dimpled water slippeth,  
Full of laughter, on its way,  
And her wing the wagtail dipbeth,  
Running by the brink at play;  
When the poplar leaves atremble  
Turn their edges to the light,  
And the far-up clouds resemble  
Veils of gauze most clear and white;  
And the sunbeams fall and flatter  
Woodland moss and branches brown,  
And the glossy finches chatter  
Up and down, up and down:

Though the heart be not attending,  
 Having music of her own,  
 On the grass, through meadows wending,  
 It is sweet to walk alone.

When the falling waters utter  
 Something mournful on their way,  
 And departing swallows flutter,  
 Taking leave of bank and brae;  
 When the chaffinch idly sitteth  
 With her mate upon the sheaves,  
 And the wistful robin flitteth  
 Over beds of yellow leaves;  
 When the clouds, like ghosts that ponder  
 Evil fate, float by and frown,  
 And the listless wind doth wander  
 Up and down, up and down:  
 Though the heart be not attending,  
 Having sorrows of her own,  
 Through the fields and fallows wending,  
 It is sad to walk alone.

*Merton.* Blind! blind! blind!  
 Oh! sitting in the dark for evermore,  
 And doing nothing — putting out a hand  
 To feel what lies about me, and to say  
 Not "This is blue or red," but "This  
 is cold,  
 And this the sun is shining on, and this  
 I know not till they tell its name to me."

O that I might behold once more, my  
 God!  
 The shining rulers of the night and day;  
 Or a star twinkling; or an almond-tree,  
 Pink with her blossom and alive with  
 bees,  
 Standing against the azure! O my  
 sight!  
 Lost, and yet living in the sunlit cells  
 Of memory — that only lightsome place  
 Where lingers yet the dayspring of my  
 youth:  
 The years of mourning for thy death  
 are long.

Be kind, sweet memory! O desert me  
 not!  
 For oft thou show'st me lucent opal  
 seas,

Fringed with their cocoa-palms, and  
 dwarf red crags,  
 Whereon the placid moon doth "rest  
 her chin;"  
 For oft by favor of thy visitings  
 I feel the dimness of an Indian night,  
 And lo! the sun is coming. Red as  
 rust  
 Between the latticed blind his pres-  
 ence burns,  
 A ruby ladder running up the wall;  
 And all the dust, printed with pigeons'  
 feet,  
 Is reddened, and the crows that stalk  
 anear  
 Begin to trail for heat their glossy  
 wings,  
 And the red flowers give back at once  
 the dew,  
 For night is gone, and day is born so  
 fast,  
 And is so strong, that, huddled as in  
 flight,  
 The fleeting darkness paleteth to a  
 shade,  
 And while she calls to sleep and dreams  
 "Come on,"  
 Suddenly waked, the sleepers rub  
 their eyes,  
 Which having opened, lo! she is no  
 more.

O misery and mourning! I have felt —  
 Yes, I have felt like some deserted  
 world  
 That God had done with, and had cast  
 aside  
 To rock and stagger through the gulfs  
 of space,  
 He never looking on it any more —  
 Untilled, no use, no pleasure, not de-  
 sired,  
 Nor lighted on by angels in their  
 flight  
 From heaven to happier planets, and  
 the race  
 That once had dwelt on it withdrawn  
 or dead.  
 Could such a world have hope that  
 some blest day  
 God would remember her, and fashion  
 her  
 Anew?

*Jessie.* What, dearest? Did you speak to me?

*Child.* I think he spoke to us.

*M.* No, little elves,  
You were so quiet that I half forgot  
Your neighborhood. What are you  
doing there?

*J.* They sit together on the window-  
mat

Nursing their dolls.

*C.* Yes, Uncle, our new dolls —  
Our best dolls, that you gave us.

*M.* Did you say  
The afternoon was bright?

*J.* Yes, bright indeed!  
The sun is on the plane-tree, and it  
flames

All red and orange.

*C.* I can see my father —  
Look! look! the leaves are falling on  
his gown.

*M.* Where?

*C.* In the churchyard, Uncle —  
he is gone;

He passed behind the tower.

*M.* I heard a bell:  
There is a funeral, then, behind the  
church.

*2d Child.* Are the trees sorry when  
their leaves drop off?

*1st Child.* You talk such silly words;  
— no, not at all.

There goes another leaf.

*2d Child.* I did not see.

*1st Child.* Look! on the grass, be-  
tween the little hills,

Just where they planted Amy.

*J.* Amy died —

Dear little Amy! when you talk of her,  
Say, she is gone to heaven.

*2d Child.* They planted her —  
Will she come up next year?

*1st Child.* No, not so soon;  
But some day God will call her to come  
up,

And then she will. Papa knows every  
thing —

He said she would before he planted  
her.

*2d Child.* It was at night she went  
to heaven. Last night

We saw a star before we went to bed.

*1st Child.* Yes, Uncle, did you know?  
A large bright star,

And at her side she had some little  
ones —

Some young ones.

*M.* Young ones! no, my little maid,  
Those stars are very old.

*1st Child.* What! all of them?

*M.* Yes.

*1st Child.* Older than our father?

*M.* Older, far.

*2d Child.* They must be tired of  
shining there so long.

Perhaps they wish they might come  
down.

*J.* Perhaps!

Dear children, talk of what you under-  
stand.

Come, I must lift the trailing creepers  
up

That last night's wind has loosened.

*1st Child.* May we help?

Aunt, may we help to nail them?

*J.* We shall see.

Go, find and bring the hammer, and  
some shreds.

[*Steps outside the window, lifts a  
branch, and sings.*]

Should I change my allegiance for ran-  
cor

If fortune changes her side?

Or should I, like a vessel at anchor,

Turn with the turn of the tide?

Lift! O lift, thou lowering sky;

An thou wilt, thy gloom forego!

An thou wilt not, he and I

Need not part for drifts of snow.

*M. [within].* Lift! no, thou lower-  
ing sky, thou wilt not lift —

Thy motto readeth, "Never."

*Children.* Here they are!

Here are the nails! and may we help?

*J.* You shall,

If I should want help.

*1st Child.* Will you want it, then?

Please want it — we like nailing.

*2d Child.* Yes, we do.

*J.* It seems I ought to want it; hold  
the bough,

And each may nail in turn.

[Sings.]

Like a daisy I was, near him growing:  
Must I move because favors flag,  
And be like a brown wall-flower blowing  
Far out of reach in a crag?  
Lift! O lift, thou lowering sky;  
An thou canst, thy blue regain!  
An thou canst not, he and I  
Need not part for drops of rain.

1st Child. Now, have we nailed  
enough?

J. [trains the creepers]. Yes, you  
may go;

But do not play too near the church-  
yard path.

M. [w. thin]. Even misfortune does  
not strike so near

As my dependence. O, in youth and  
strength

To sit a timid coward in the dark,  
And feel before I set a cautious step!

It is so very dark, so far more dark  
Than any night that day comes after —  
night

In which there would be stars, or else  
at least

The silvered portion of a sombre cloud  
Through which the moon is plunging.

J. [entering]. Merton!

M. Yes.

J. Dear Merton, did you know that  
I could hear?

M. No: e'en my solitude is not  
mine now,

And if I be alone is oft-times doubt.  
Alas! far more than eyesight have I  
lost;

For manly courage drifteth after it —  
E'en as a splintered spar would drift  
away

From some dismantled wreck. Hear, I  
complain —

Like a weak ailing woman I complain.  
J. For the first time.

M. I cannot bear the dark.

J. My brother! you do bear it —  
bear it well —

Have borne it twelve long months, and  
not complained.

Comfort your heart with music: all the  
air

Is warm with sunbeams where the organ  
stands.

You like to feel them on you. Come  
and play.

M. My fate, my fate, is lonely!

J. So it is —

I know it is.

M. And pity breaks my heart.

J. Does it, dear Merton?

M. Yes, I say it does.

What! do you think I am so dull of ear  
That I can mark no changes in the tones

That reach me? Once I liked not girl-  
ish pride

And that coy quiet, chary of reply,  
That held me distant: now the sweet-  
est lips

Open to entertain me — fairest hands  
Are proffered me to guide.

J. That is not well?

M. No: give me coldness, pride, or  
still disdain,

Gentle withdrawal. Give me any thing  
But this — a fearless, sweet, confiding

ease,  
Whereof I may expect, I may exact,

Considerate care, and have it — gentle  
speech,

And have it. Give me any thing but  
this!

For they who give it, give it in the faith  
That I will not misdeem them, and for-  
get

My doom so far as to perceive thereby  
Hope of a wife. They make this

thought too plain;  
They wound me — O they cut me to  
the heart!

When have I said to any one of them,  
"I am a blind and desolate man; —  
come here,

I pray you — be as eyes to me?" When  
said,

Even to her whose pitying voice is  
sweet

To my dark ruined heart, as must be  
hands

That clasp a lifelong captive's through  
the grate,

And who will ever lend her delicate aid  
To guide me, dark incumbrance that I  
am! —

When have I said to her, "Comfort-  
ing voice,

Belonging to a face unknown, I pray  
Be my wife's voice?"

*J.* Never, my brother — no,  
You never have!

*M.* What could she think of me  
If I forgot myself so far? or what  
Could she reply?

*J.* You ask not as men ask  
Who care for an opinion, else, perhaps,  
Although I am not sure — although,  
perhaps,  
I have no right to give one — I should  
say  
She would reply, "I will!"

---

*Afterthought.*

Man dwells apart, though not alone,  
He walks among his peers unread;  
The best of thoughts which he hath  
known  
For lack of listeners are not said.

Yet dreaming on earth's clustered isles,  
He saith, "They dwell not lone like  
men."

Forgetful that their sunflecked smiles  
Flash far beyond each other's ken.

He looks on God's eternal suns  
That sprinkle the celestial blue,  
And saith, "Ah! happy shining ones,  
I would that men were grouped like  
you!"

Yet this is sure: the loveliest star  
That clustered with its peers we see,  
Only because from us so far  
Doth near its fellows seem to be.

---

SONGS OF SEVEN.

SEVEN TIMES ONE. EXULTATION.

THERE's no dew left on the daisies and  
clover,  
There's no rain left in heaven:  
I've said my "seven times" over and  
over,  
Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter;  
My birthday lessons are done;  
The lambs play always, they know no  
better;  
They are only one times one.

O moon! in the night I have seen you  
sailing  
And shining so round and low;  
You were bright! ah, bright! but your  
light is failing, —  
You are nothing now but a bow.

You moon, have you done something  
wrong in heaven  
That God has hidden your face?  
I hope if you have you will soon be  
forgiven,  
And shine again in your place.

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,  
You've powdered your legs with gold!  
O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yel-  
low,  
Give me your money to hold!

O columbine, open your folded wrap-  
per,  
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell!  
O cuckoopint, toll me the purple clap-  
per  
That hangs in your clear green bell!

And show me your nest with the young  
ones in it;  
I will not steal them away;  
I am old! you may trust me, linnet,  
linnet —  
I am seven times one to-day.

---

SEVEN TIMES TWO. ROMANCE.

You bells in the steeple, ring, ring out  
your changes,  
How many soever they be,  
And let the brown meadow-lark's note  
as he ranges  
Come over, come over to me.



Yet birds' clearest carol by fall or by  
 swelling  
 No magical sense conveys,  
 And bells have forgotten their old art  
 of telling  
 The fortune of future days.

"Turn again, turn again," once they  
 rang cheerily,  
 While a boy listened alone ;  
 Made his heart yearn again, musing so  
 wearily  
 All by himself on a stone.

Poor bells! I forgive you ; your good  
 days are over,  
 And mine, they are yet to be ;  
 No listening, no longing shall aught,  
 aught discover :  
 You leave the story to me.

The foxglove shoots out of the green  
 matted heather,  
 Preparing her hoods of snow ;  
 She was idle, and slept till the sun-  
 shiny weather :  
 O, children take long to grow.

I wish and I wish that the spring  
 would go faster,  
 Nor long summer bide so late ;  
 And I could grow on like the foxglove  
 and aster,  
 For some things are ill to wait.

I wait for the day when dear hearts  
 shall discover,  
 While dear hands are laid on my  
 head ;  
 "The child is a woman, the book may  
 close over,  
 For all the lessons are said."

I wait for my story — the birds cannot  
 sing it,  
 Not one, as he sits on the tree ;  
 The bells cannot ring it, but long years,  
 O bring it!  
 Such as I wish it to be.

## SEVEN TIMES THREE. LOVE.

I leaned out of window, I smelt the  
 white clover,  
 Dark, dark was the garden, I saw  
 not the gate ;  
 "Now, if there be footsteps, he comes,  
 my one lover —  
 Hush, nightingale, hush! O, sweet  
 nightingale, wait  
 Till I listen and hear  
 If a step draweth near,  
 For my love he is late!

"The skies in the darkness stoop nearer  
 and nearer,  
 A cluster of stars hangs like fruit in  
 the tree,  
 The fall of the water comes sweeter,  
 comes clearer :  
 To what art thou listening, and what  
 dost thou see?  
 Let the star-clusters grow,  
 Let the sweet waters flow,  
 And cross quickly to me.

"You night moths that hover where  
 honey brims over  
 From sycamore blossoms, or settle  
 or sleep ;  
 You glowworms, shine out, and the  
 pathway discover  
 To him that comes darkling along  
 the rough steep.  
 Ah, my sailor, make haste,  
 For the time runs to waste,  
 And my love lieth deep —

"Too deep for swift telling ; and yet,  
 my one lover,  
 I've conned thee an answer, it waits  
 thee to-night."  
 By the sycamore passed he, and through  
 the white clover,  
 Then all the sweet speech I had  
 fashioned took flight ;  
 But I'll love him more, more  
 Than e'er wife loved before,  
 Be the days dark or bright.

## SEVEN TIMES FOUR. MATERNITY.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,  
 Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall!  
 When the wind wakes how they rock  
 in the grasses,  
 And dance with the cuckoo-buds  
 slender and small!  
 Here's two bonny boys, and here's  
 mother's own lasses,  
 Eager to gather them all.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups!  
 Mother shall thread them a daisy  
 chain;  
 Sing them a song of the pretty hedge  
 sparrow,  
 That loved her brown little ones,  
 loved them full fain;  
 Sing, "Heart, thou art wide though  
 the house be but narrow" —  
 Sing once, and sing it again.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,  
 Sweet wagging cowslips, they bend  
 and they bow;  
 A ship sails afar over warm ocean  
 waters,  
 And haply one musing doth stand at  
 her prow.  
 O bonny brown sons, and O sweet little  
 daughters,  
 Maybe he thinks on you now!

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,  
 Fair yellow daffodils, stately and  
 tall!  
 A sunshiny world full of laughter and  
 leisure,  
 And fresh hearts unconscious of sor-  
 row and thrall!  
 Send down on their pleasure smiles  
 passing its measure,  
 God that is over us all!

## SEVEN TIMES FIVE. WIDOWHOOD.

I sleep and rest, my heart makes moan  
 Before I am well awake;  
 "Let me bleed! O let me alone,  
 Since I must not break!"

For children wake, though fathers sleep  
 With a stone at foot and at head:  
 O sleepless God, for ever keep,  
 Keep both living and dead!

I lift mine eyes, and what to see  
 But a world happy and fair!  
 I have not wished it to mourn with  
 me —  
 Comfort is not there.

O what anear but golden brooms,  
 And a waste of reedy rills!  
 O what afar but the fine glooms  
 On the rare blue hills!

I shall not die, but live forlore —  
 How bitter it is to part!  
 O to meet thee, my love, once more!  
 O my heart, my heart!

No more to hear, no more to see!  
 O that an echo might wake  
 And waft one note of thy psalm to me  
 Ere my heart-strings break!

I should know it how faint soe'er,  
 And with angel voices blent;  
 O once to feel thy spirit anear;  
 I could be content!

Or once between the gates of gold,  
 While an entering angel trod,  
 But once — thee sitting to behold  
 On the hills of God!

SEVEN TIMES SIX. GIVING IN MAR-  
RIAGE.

To bear, to nurse, to rear,  
 To watch, and then to lose:  
 To see my bright ones disappear,  
 Drawn up like morning dew —  
 To bear, to nurse, to rear,  
 To watch, and then to lose:  
 This have I done when God drew near  
 Among his own to choose.

To hear, to heed, to wed,  
 And with thy lord depart  
 In tears that he, as soon as shed,  
 Will let no longer smart. —

To hear, to heed, to wed,  
 This while thou didst I smiled,  
 For now it was not God who said,  
 "Mother, give me thy child."

O fond, O fool, and blind !  
 To God I gave with tears ;  
 But when a man like grace would find,  
 My soul put by her fears —  
 O fond, O fool, and blind !  
 God guards in happier spheres ;  
 That man will guard where he did bind  
 Is hope for unknown years.

To hear, to heed, to wed,  
 Fair lot that maidens choose,  
 Thy mother's tenderest words are said,  
 Thy face no more she views ;  
 Thy mother's lot, my dear,  
 She doth in nought accuse ;  
 Her lot to bear, to nurse, to rear,  
 To love — and then to lose.

---

SEVEN TIMES SEVEN. LONGING FOR HOME.

## I.

A song of a boat : —  
 There was once a boat on a billow :  
 Lightly she rocked to her port remote,  
 And the foam was white in her wake  
     like snow,  
 And her frail mast bowed when the  
     breeze would blow,  
 And bent like a wand of willow.

## II.

I shaded mine eyes one day when a  
     boat  
 Went curtsying over the billow,  
 I marked her course till a dancing  
     mote  
 She faded out on the moonlit foam,  
 And I stayed behind in the dear loved  
     home ;  
 And my thoughts all day were about  
     the boat  
 And my dreams upon the pillow.

## III.

I pray you hear my song of a boat,  
 For it is but short : —  
 My boat, you shall find none fairer  
     afloat,  
 In river or port.  
 Long I looked out for the lad she  
     bore,  
 On the open desolate sea,  
 And I think he sailed to the heavenly  
     shore,  
 For he came not back to me —  
                     Ah me !

## IV.

A song of a nest : —  
 There was once a nest in a hollow :  
 Down in the mosses and knot-grass  
     pressed,  
 Soft and warm, and full to the brim —  
 Vetches leaned over it purple and dim,  
 With buttercup buds to follow.

## V.

I pray you hear my song of a nest,  
 For it is not long : —  
 You shall never light, in a summer  
     quest  
 The bushes among —  
 Shall never light on a prouder sitter,  
 A fairer nestful, nor ever know  
 A softer sound than their tender twitter,  
 That wind-like did come and go.

## VI.

I had a nestful once of my own,  
 Ah, happy, happy I !  
 Right dearly I loved them : but when  
     they were grown  
 They spread out their wings to fly —  
 O, one after one they flew away  
 Far up to the heavenly blue,  
 To the better country, the upper day,  
 And — I wish I was going too.

## VII.

I pray you, what is the nest to me,  
 My empty nest ?  
 And what is the shore where I stood to  
     see  
 My boat sail down to the west ?

Can I call that home where I anchor  
 yet,  
 Though my good man has sailed?  
 Can I call that home where my nest  
 was set,  
 Now all its hope hath failed?  
 Nay, but the port where my sailor  
 went,  
 And the land where my nestlings  
 be:  
 There is the home where my thoughts  
 are sent,  
 The only home for me —  
 Ah me!



### A COTTAGE IN A CHINE.

WE reached the place by night,  
 And heard the waves breaking:  
 They came to meet us with candles  
 alight  
 To show the path we were taking.  
 A myrtle, trained on the gate, was  
 white  
 With tufted flowers down shaking.

With head beneath her wing,  
 A little wren was sleeping —  
 So near, I had found it an easy thing  
 To steal her for my keeping  
 From the myrtle bough that with easy  
 swing  
 Across the path was sweeping.

Down rocky steps rough-hewed,  
 Where cup-mosses flowered,  
 And under the trees, all twisted and  
 rude,  
 Wherewith the dell was dowered,  
 They led us, where deep in its solitude  
 Lay the cottage, leaf-embowered.

The thatch was all bespread  
 With climbing passion flowers;  
 They were wet, and glistened with rain-  
 drops, shed  
 That day in genial showers.  
 "Was never a sweeter nest," we said,  
 "Than this little nest of ours."

We laid us down to sleep:  
 But as for me — waking,  
 I marked the plunge of the muffled  
 deep  
 On its sandy reaches breaking;  
 For heart-joyance doth sometimes keep  
 From slumber, like heart-aching.

And I was glad that night,  
 With no reason ready,  
 To give my own heart for its deep de-  
 light,  
 That flowed like some tidal eddy,  
 Or shone like a star that was rising  
 bright  
 With comforting radiance steady.

But on a sudden — hark!  
 Music struck asunder  
 Those meshes of bliss, and I wept in  
 the dark,  
 So sweet was the unseen wonder;  
 So swiftly it touched, as if struck at a  
 mark,  
 The trouble that joy kept under.

I rose — the moon outshone:  
 I saw the sea heaving,  
 And a little vessel sailing alone,  
 The small crisp wavelet cleaving;  
 'T was she as she sailed to her port un-  
 known —  
 Was that track of sweetness leaving.

We know they music made  
 In heaven, ere man's creation;  
 But when God threw it down to us  
 that strayed,  
 It dropt with lamentation,  
 And ever since doth its sweetness shade  
 With sighs for its first station.

Its joy suggests regret —  
 Its most for more is yearning;  
 And it brings to the soul that its voice  
 hath met  
 No rest that cadence learning,  
 But a conscious part in the sighs that  
 fret  
 Its nature for returning.

O Eve, sweet Eve! methought  
 When sometimes comfort winning,  
 As she watched the first children's  
 tender sport,  
 Sole joy born since her sinning,  
 If a bird anear them sang, it thought  
 The pang as at beginning.

While swam the unshed tear,  
 Her prattlers, little heeding,  
 Would murmur, "This bird, with its  
 carol clear,  
 When the red clay was kneaden,  
 And God made Adam our father dear,  
 Sang to him thus in Eden."

The moon went in — the sky  
 And earth and sea hiding;  
 I laid me down, with the yearning sigh  
 Of that strain in my heart abiding;  
 I slept, and the barque that had sailed  
 so nigh  
 In my dream was ever gliding.

I slept, but waked amazed,  
 With sudden noise frightened,  
 And voices without, and a flash that  
 dazed  
 My eyes from candles lighted.  
 "Ah! surely," methought, "by these  
 shouts upraised,  
 Some travellers are benighted."

A voice was at my side —  
 "Waken, madam, waken!  
 The long prayed-for ship at her anchor  
 doth ride.  
 Let the child from its rest be taken,  
 For the captain doth weary for babe  
 and for bride —  
 Waken, madam, waken!

"The home you left but late,  
 He speeds to it light-hearted;  
 By the wires he sent this news, and  
 straight  
 To you with it they started."  
 O joy for a yearning heart too great,  
 O union for the parted!

We rose up in the night,  
 The morning star was shining;  
 We carried the child in its slumber  
 light  
 Out by the myrtles twining:  
 Orion over the sea hung bright,  
 And glorious in declining.

Mother, to meet her son,  
 Smiled first, then wept the rather;  
 And wife, to bind up those links un-  
 done,  
 And cherished words to gather,  
 And to show the face of her little one,  
 That had never seen its father.

That cottage in a chine,  
 We were not to behold it;  
 But there may the purest of sunbeams  
 shine,  
 May freshest flowers enfold it,  
 For sake of the news which our hearts  
 must twine  
 With the bower where we were told it!

Now oft, left alone again,  
 Sit mother and sit daughter,  
 And bless the good ship that sailed  
 over the main,  
 And the favoring winds that brought  
 her;  
 While still some new beauty they fable  
 and feign  
 For the cottage by the water.

PERSEPHONE.

Written for THE PORTFOLIO SOCIETY,  
 January, 1862.

*Subject given — "Light and Shade."*

SHE stepped upon Sicilian grass,  
 Demeter's daughter fresh and fair,  
 A child of light, a radiant lass,  
 And gamesome as the morning air.  
 The daffodils were fair to see,  
 They nodded lightly on the lea,  
 Persephone — Persephone!

Lo! one she marked of rarer growth  
 Than orchis or anemone;  
 For it the maiden left them both,  
 And parted from her company.  
 Drawn nigh she deemed it fairer still,  
 And stooped to gather by the rill  
 The daffodil, the daffodil.

What ailed the meadow that it shook?  
 What ailed the air of Sicily?  
 She wondered by the brattling brook,  
 And trembled with the trembling lea.  
 "The coal-black horses rise — they  
 rise:  
 O mother, mother!" low she cries —  
 Persephone — Persephone!

"O light, light, light!" she cries,  
 "farewell;  
 The coal-black horses wait for me.  
 O shade of shades, where I must dwell,  
 Demeter, mother, far from thee!  
 Ah, fated doom that I fulfil!  
 Ah, fateful flower beside the rill!  
 The daffodil, the daffodil!"

What ails her that she comes not home?  
 Demeter seeks her far and wide,  
 And gloomy-browed doth ceaseless  
 roam  
 From many a morn till eventide.  
 "My life, immortal though it be,  
 Is nought," she cries, "for want of  
 thee,  
 Persephone — Persephone!

"Meadows of Enna, let the rain  
 No longer drop to feed your rills,  
 Nor dew refresh the fields again,  
 With all their nodding daffodils!  
 Fade, fade and droop, O lily lea,  
 Where thou, dear heart, wert reft from  
 me —  
 Persephone — Persephone!"

---

She reigns upon her dusky throne,  
 'Mid shades of heroes dread to see;  
 Among the dead she breathes alone,  
 Persephone — Persephone!  
 Or seated on the Elysian hill  
 She dreams of earthly daylight still,  
 And murmurs of the daffodil.

A voice in Hades soundeth clear,  
 The shadows mourn and flit below;  
 It cries — "Thou Lord of Hades, hear,  
 And let Demeter's daughter go.  
 The tender corn upon the lea  
 Droops in her goddess gloom when she  
 Cries for her lost Persephone.

"From land to land she raging flies,  
 The green fruit falleth in her wake,  
 And harvest fields beneath her eyes  
 To earth the grain unripened shake.  
 Arise, and set the maiden free;  
 Why should the world such sorrow dree  
 By reason of Persephone?"

He takes the cleft pomegranate seeds:  
 "Love, eat with me this parting  
 day;"  
 Then bids them fetch the coal-black  
 steeds —  
 "Demeter's daughter, wouldst  
 away?"  
 The gates of Hades set her free;  
 "She will return full soon," saith he —  
 "My wife, my wife Persephone."

Low laughs the dark king on his  
 throne —  
 "I gave her of pomegranate seeds."  
 Demeter's daughter stands alone  
 Upon the fair Eleusian meads.  
 Her mother meets her. "Hail," saith  
 she;  
 "And doth our daylight dazzle thee,  
 My love, my child Persephone?"

"What moved thee, daughter, to for-  
 sake  
 Thy fellow-maids that fatal morn,  
 And give thy dark lord power to take  
 Thee living to his realm forlorn?"  
 Her lips reply without her will,  
 As one addressed who slumbereth  
 still —  
 "The daffodil, the daffodil!"

Her eyelids droop with light oppressed,  
 And sunny wafts that round her stir,  
 Her cheek upon her mother's breast —  
 Demeter's kisses comfort her.  
 Calm Queen of Hades, art thou she  
 Who stepped so lightly on the lea —  
 Persephone, Persephone?

When, in her destined course, the moon  
Meets the deep shadow of this world,  
And laboring on doth seem to swoon  
Through awful wastes of dimness  
whirled—

Emerged at length, no trace hath she  
Of that dark hour of destiny,  
Still silvery sweet — Persephone.

The greater world may near the less,  
And draw it through her weltering  
shade,

But not one biding trace impress  
Of all the darkness that she made ;  
The greater soul that draweth thee  
Hath left his shadow plain to see  
On thy fair face, Persephone !

Demeter sighs, but sure 'tis well  
The wife should love her destiny :  
They part, and yet, as legends tell,  
She mourns her lost Persephone ;  
While chant the maids of Enna still—  
"O fateful flower beside the rill—  
The daffodil, the daffodil !"

### A SEA SONG.

OLD ALBION sat on a crag of late,  
And sung out—"Ahoy! ahoy!  
Long life to the captain, good luck to  
the mate,

And this to my sailor boy!  
Come over, come home,  
Through the salt sea foam,  
My sailor, my sailor boy!

"Here's a crown to be given away, I  
ween,

A crown for my sailor's head,  
And all for the worth of a widowed  
queen,

And the love of the noble dead,  
And the fear and fame  
Of the island's name  
Where my boy was born and bred.

"Content thee, content thee, let it  
alone,  
Thou marked for a choice so rare ;  
Though treaties be treaties, never a  
throne

Was proffered for cause as fair.  
Yet come to me home,  
Through the salt sea foam,  
For the Greek must ask elsewhere.

"'Tis pity, my sailor, but who can tell ?  
Many lands they look to me ;  
One of these might be wanting a Prince  
as well,  
But that's as hereafter may be."  
She raised her white head  
And laughed ; and she said,  
"That's as hereafter may be."

### BROTHERS, AND A SERMON.

IT was a village built in a green rent,  
Between two cliffs that skirt the dan-  
gerous bay.

A reef of level rock runs out to sea,  
And you may lie on it and look sheer  
down,  
Just where the "Grace of Sunderland"  
was lost,  
And see the elastic banners of the dulse  
Rock softly, and the orange star-fish  
creep  
Across the laver, and the mackerel  
shoot  
Over and under it, like silver boats  
Turning at will and plying under water.

There on that reef we lay upon our  
breasts, [lads,  
My brother and I, and half the village  
For an old fisherman had called to us  
With "Sirs, the syle be come." "And  
what are they?"  
My brother said. "Good lack!" the  
old man cried,  
And shook his head; "to think you  
gentlefolk  
Should ask what syle be! Look you;  
I can't say  
What syle be called in your fine dic-  
tionaries,  
Nor what name God Almighty calls  
them by  
When their food's ready and He sends  
them south ;

But our folk call them syle, and nought  
but syle,  
And when they're grown, why then  
we call them herring.

I tell you, Sir, the water is as full  
Of them as pastures be of blades of  
grass ;  
You'll draw a score out in a landing  
net,  
And none of them be longer than a pin.

"Syle! ay, indeed, we should be badly  
off,  
I reckon, and so would God Almighty's  
gulls,"

He grumbled on in his quaint piety,  
"And all his other birds, if He should  
say

I will not drive my syle into the south ;  
The fisher folk may do without my syle,  
And do without the shoals of fish it  
draws

To follow and feed on it."

This said, we made  
Our peace with him by means of two  
small coins,

And down we ran and lay upon the reef,  
And saw the swimming infants, emer-  
ald green,

In separate shoals, the scarcely turning  
ebb  
Bringing them in ; while sleek, and not  
intent

On chase, but taking that which came  
to hand,

The full-fed mackerel and the gurnet  
swam

Between ; and settling on the polished  
sea,

A thousand snow-white gulls sat lov-  
ingly

In social rings, and twittered while they  
fed.

The village dogs and ours, elate and  
brave,

Lay looking over, barking at the fish ;  
Fast, fast the silver creatures took the  
bait,

And when they heaved and floundered  
on the rock,

In beauteous misery, a sudden pat  
Some shaggy pup would deal, then  
back away,

At distance eye them with sagacious  
doubt,  
And shrink half frightened from the slip-  
pery things.

And so we lay from ebb-tide, till the flow  
Rose high enough to drive us from the  
reef ;

The fisher lads went home across the  
sand ;

We climbed the cliff, and sat an hour  
or more,

Talking and looking down. It was not  
talk

Of much significance, except for this —  
That we had more in common than of  
old,

For both were tired, I with overwork,  
He with inaction ; I was glad at heart  
To rest, and he was glad to have an ear  
That he could grumble to, and half in  
jest

Rail at entails, deplore the fate of heirs,  
And the misfortune of a good estate —  
Misfortune that was sure to pull him  
down,

Make him a dreamy, selfish, useless  
man :

Indeed he felt himself deteriorate  
Already. Thereupon he sent down  
showers

Of clattering stones, to emphasize his  
words,

And leap the cliffs and tumble noisily  
Into the seething wave. And as for  
me,

I railed at him and at ingratitude,  
While rifling of the basket he had slung  
Across his shoulders ; then with right  
good will

We fell to work, and feasted like the  
gods,

Like laborers, or like eager workhouse  
folk

At Yuletide dinner ; or, to say the whole  
At once, like tired, hungry, healthy  
youth,

Until the meal being o'er, the tilted  
flask

Drained of its latest drop, the meat and  
bread

And ruddy cherries eaten, and the dogs  
Mumbling the bones, this elder brother  
of mine —



This man, that never felt an ache or pain  
In his broad, well-knit frame, and never  
knew

The trouble of an unforgiven grudge,  
The sting of a regretted meanness, nor  
The desperate struggle of the unen-  
dowed

For place and for possession — he began  
To sing a rhyme that he himself had  
wrought;

Sending it out with cogitative pause,  
As if the scene where he had shaped it  
first

Had rolled it back on him, and meet-  
ing it

Thus unaware, he was of doubtful mind  
Whether his dignity it well beseeemed  
To sing of pretty maiden :

Goldilocks sat on the grass,  
Tying up of posies rare ;  
Hardly could a sunbeam pass  
Through the cloud that was her hair.  
Purple orchis lasteth long,  
Primrose flowers are pale and clear ;  
O the maiden sang a song  
It would do you good to hear !

Sad before her leaned the boy,  
"Goldilocks that I love well,  
Happy creature fair and coy,  
Think o' me, Sweet Amabel."  
Goldilocks she shook apart,  
Looked with doubtful, doubtful eyes ;  
Like a blossom on her heart  
Opened out her first surprise.

As a gloriole sign o' grace,  
Goldilocks, ah, fall and flow  
On the blooming, childlike face,  
Dimple, dimple, come and go.  
Give her time ; on grass and sky  
Let her gaze if she be fain :  
As they looked ere he drew nigh,  
They will never look again.

Ah! the playtime she has known,  
While her goldilocks grew long,  
Is it like a nestling flown,  
Childhood over like a song ?  
Yes, the boy may clear his brow,  
Though she thinks to say him nay,  
When she sighs, "I cannot now —  
Come again some other day."

"Hold there!" he cried, half angry  
with himself ;

"That ending goes amiss:" then  
turned again

To the old argument that we had held —  
"Now look you!" said my brother,  
"you may talk

Till, weary of the talk, I answer 'Ay,  
There's reason in your words ;' and  
you may talk

Till I go on to say, 'This should be so ;'  
And you may talk till I shall further own  
'It is so ; yes, I am a lucky dog!'

Yet not the less shall I next morning  
wake,

And with a natural and fervent sigh,  
Such as you never heaved, I shall ex-  
claim

'What an unlucky dog I am!'" And  
here

He broke into a laugh. "But as for  
you —

You! on all hands you have the best  
of me ;

Men have not robbed you of your birth-  
right — work,

Nor ravaged in old days a peaceful field,  
Nor wedded heiresses against their will,  
Nor sinned, nor slaved, nor stooped,  
nor overreached,

That you might drone a useless life  
away

'Mid half a score of bleak and barren  
farms

And half a dozen bogs."

"O rare!" I cried ;  
"His wrongs go nigh to make him  
eloquent :

Now we behold how far bad actions  
reach!

Because five hundred years ago a  
Knight

Drove geese and beeves out from a  
franklin's yard ;

Because three hundred years ago a  
squire —

Against her will, and for her fair estate—  
Married a very ugly, red-haired maid,  
The blest inheritor of all their pelf,  
While in the full enjoyment of the same,  
Sighs on his own confession every day.  
He cracks no egg without a moral sigh,  
Nor eats of beef but thinking on that  
wrong ;

Then, yet the more to be revenged on  
 them,  
 And shame their ancient pride, if they  
 should know,  
 Works hard as any horse for his degree,  
 And takes to writing verses.”  
 “Ay,” he said,  
 Half laughing at himself. “Yet you  
 and I,  
 But for those tresses which enrich us  
 yet  
 With somewhat of the hue that partial  
 fame  
 Calls auburn when it shines on heads  
 of heirs,  
 But when it flames round brows of  
 younger sons,  
 Just red — mere red ; why, but for this,  
 I say,  
 And-but for selfish getting of the land,  
 And beggarly entailing it, we two,  
 To-day well fed, well grown, well  
 dressed, well read,  
 We might have been two horny-handed  
 boors —  
 Lean, clumsy, ignorant, and ragged  
 boors —  
 Planning for moonlight nights a poach-  
 ing scheme,  
 Or soiling our dull souls and consciences  
 With plans for pilfering a cottage roost.

“What, chorus! are you dumb? you  
 should have cried,  
 ‘So good comes out of evil;’” and  
 with that,  
 As if all pauses it was natural  
 To seize for songs, his voice broke out  
 again :

Coo, dove, to thy married mate —  
 She has two warm eggs in her nest :  
 Tell her the hours are few to wait  
 Ere life shall dawn on their rest ;  
 And thy young shall peck at the shells,  
 elate  
 With a dream of her brooding breast.

Coo, dove, for she counts the hours,  
 Her fair wings ache for flight :  
 By day the apple has grown in the  
 flowers,

And the moon has grown by night,  
 And the white drift settled from haw-  
 thorn bowers,  
 Yet they will not seek the light.

Coo, dove ; but what of the sky ?  
 And what if the storm-wind swell,  
 And the reeling branch come down from  
 on high  
 To the grass where daisies dwell,  
 And the brood beloved should with them  
 lie  
 Or ever they break the shell ?

Coo, dove ; and yet black clouds lower,  
 Like fate, on the far-off sea :  
 Thunder and wind they bear to thy  
 bower,  
 As on wings of destiny.  
 Ah, what if they break in an evil hour,  
 As they broke over mine and me ?

What next? — we started like to girls,  
 for lo!  
 The creaking voice, more harsh than  
 rusty crane,  
 Of one who stooped behind us, cried  
 aloud,  
 “Good lack ! how sweet the gentleman  
 does sing —  
 So loud and sweet, ’tis like to split his  
 throat.  
 Why, Mike’s a child to him, a two-  
 years child —  
 A Chrisom child.”

“Who’s Mike?” my brother growled  
 A little roughly. Quoth the fisher-  
 man —  
 “Mike, Sir? he’s just a fisher lad, no  
 more ;  
 But he can sing, when he takes on to  
 sing,  
 So loud there’s not a sparrow in the spire  
 But needs must hear. Sir, if I might  
 make bold,  
 I’d ask what song that was you sung.  
 My mate,  
 As we were shoving off the mackerel  
 boats,  
 Said he, ‘I’ll wager that’s the sort o’  
 song  
 They kept their hearts up with in the  
 Crimea.’”

"There, fisherman," quoth I, "he showed his wit,  
Your mate; he marked the sound of  
savage war —  
Gunpowder, groans, hot-shot, and  
bursting shells,  
And 'murderous messages,' delivered  
by  
Spent balls that break the heads of  
dreaming men."

"Ay, ay, Sir!" quoth the fisherman.  
"Have done!"  
My brother. And I — "The gift be-  
longs to few  
Of sending farther than the words can  
reach  
Their spirit and expression;" still  
"Have done!"  
He cried; and then "I rolled the rub-  
bish out  
More loudly than the meaning war-  
ranted,  
To air my lungs — I thought not on  
the words."

Then said the fisherman, who missed  
the point,  
"So Mike rolls out the psalm; you'll  
hear him, Sir,  
Please God you live till Sunday."

"Even so:  
And you, too, fisherman; for here, they  
say,  
You all are church-goers."

"Surely, Sir," quoth he,  
Took off his hat, and stroked his old  
white head  
And wrinkled face; then sitting by us  
said,  
As one that utters with a quiet mind  
Unchallenged truth — "'Tis lucky for  
the boats."

The boats! 'tis lucky for the boats!  
Our eyes  
Were drawn to him as either fain would  
say,  
What! do they send the psalm up in  
the spire  
And pray because 'tis lucky for the  
boats?

But he, the brown old man, the wrinkled  
man,  
That all his life had been a church-  
goer,  
Familiar with celestial cadences,  
Informed of all he could receive, and  
sure  
Of all he understood — he sat content,  
And we kept silence. In his reverend  
face  
There was a simpleness we could not  
sound;  
Much truth had passed him overhead;  
some error  
He had trod under foot; — God comfort  
him!  
He could not learn of us, for we were  
young  
And he was old, and so we gave it up;  
And the sun went into the west, and  
down  
Upon the water stooped an orange  
cloud,  
And the pale milky reaches flushed, as  
glad  
To wear its colors; and the sultry air  
Went out to sea, and puffed the sails  
of ships  
With thymy wafts, the breath of trod-  
den grass:  
It took moreover music, for across  
The heather belt and over pasture land  
Came the sweet monotone of one slow  
bell,  
And parted time into divisions rare,  
Whereof each morsel brought its own  
delight.

"They ring for service," quoth the  
fisherman;  
"Our parson preaches in the church  
to-night."

"And do the people go?" my brother  
asked.

"Ay, Sir; they count it mean to stay  
away,  
He takes it so to heart. He's a rare  
man,  
Our parson; half a head above us all."

"That's a great gift, and notable,"  
said I.

"Ay, Sir; and when he was a younger man

He went out in the life-boat very oft,  
Before the 'Grace of Sunderland' was wrecked.

He's never been his own man since that hour;

For there were thirty men aboard of her,  
Anigh as close as you are now to me,  
And ne'er a one was saved.

They're lying now,  
With two small children, in a row: the church

And yard are full of seamen's graves,  
and few

Have any names.

She bumped upon the reef;  
Our parson, my young son, and several more

Were lashed together with a two-inch rope,

And crept along to her; their mates ashore

Ready to haul them in. The gale was high,

The sea was all a boiling, seething froth,  
And God Almighty's guns were going off,

And the land trembled.

"When she took the ground,  
She went to pieces like a lock of hay  
Tossed from a pitchfork. Ere it came to that,

The captain reeled on deck with two small things,

One in each arm—his little lad and lass.

Their hair was long, and blew before his face,

Or else we thought he had been saved;  
he fell,

But held them fast. The crew, poor luckless souls!

The breakers licked them off; and some were crushed,

Some swallowed in the yeast, some flung up dead,

The dear breath beaten out of them: not one

Jumped from the wreck upon the reef to catch

The hands that strained to reach, but tumbled back

With eyes wide open. But the captain lay

And clung—the only man alive. They prayed—

'For God's sake, captain, throw the children here!'

'Throw them!' our parson cried; and then she struck:

And he threw one, a pretty two-years child;

But the gale dashed him on the slippery verge,

And down he went. They say they heard him cry.

"Then he rose up and took the other one,

And all our men reached out their hungry arms,

And cried out, 'Throw her!' and he did:

He threw her right against the parson's breast,

And all at once a sea broke over them,  
And they that saw it from the shore

have said  
It struck the wreck, and piecemeal scattered it,

Just as a woman might the lump of salt

That 'twixt her hands into the kneading-pan

She breaks and crumbles on her rising bread.

"We hauled our men in: two of them were dead—

The sea had beaten them, their heads hung down;

Our parson's arms were empty, for the wave

Had torn away the pretty, pretty lamb;  
We often see him stand beside her

grave:  
But 'twas no fault of his, no fault of his.

"I ask your pardon, Sirs; I prate and prate,

And never have I said what brought me here.

Sirs, if you want a boat to-morrow morn,

I'm bold to say there's ne'er a boat like mine."

"Ay, that was what we wanted," we replied;  
 "A boat, his boat;" and off he went, well pleased.

We, too, rose up (the crimson in the sky  
 Flushing our faces), and went sauntering on,  
 And thought to reach our lodging, by the cliff.  
 And up and down among the heather beds,  
 And up and down between the sheaves, we sped,  
 Doubling and winding; for a long ravine  
 Ran up into the land and cut us off,  
 Pushing out slippery ledges for the birds,  
 And rent with many a crevice, where the wind  
 Had laid up drifts of empty egg-shells, swept  
 From the bare berths of gulls and guillemots.

So as it chanced we lighted on a path  
 That led into a nutwood; and our talk  
 Was louder than beseemed, if we had known,  
 With argument and laughter; for the path,  
 As we sped onward, took a sudden turn  
 Abrupt, and we came out on churchyard grass,  
 And close upon a porch, and face to face  
 With those within, and with the thirty graves.  
 We heard the voice of one who preached within,  
 And stopped. "Come on," my brother whispered me;  
 "It were more decent that we enter now;  
 Come on! we'll hear this rare old demigod:  
 I like strong men and large; I like grey heads,  
 And grand gruff voices, hoarse though this may be  
 With shouting in the storm."

It was not hoarse,  
 The voice that preached to those few fishermen,  
 And women, nursing mothers with the babes  
 Hushed on their breasts; and yet it held them not:  
 Their drowsy eyes were drawn to look at us,  
 Till, having leaned our rods against the wall,  
 And left the dogs at watch, we entered, sat,  
 And were apprised that, though he saw us not,  
 The parson knew that he had lost the eyes  
 And ears of those before him, for he made  
 A pause—a long dead pause—and dropped his arms,  
 And stood awaiting, till I felt the red  
 Mount to my brow.

And a soft fluttering stir  
 Passed over all, and every mother hushed  
 The babe beneath her shawl, and he turned round  
 And met our eyes, unused to diffidence,  
 But diffident of his; then with a sigh  
 Fronted the folk, lifted his grand grey head,  
 And said, as one that pondered now the words  
 He had been preaching on with new surprise,  
 And found fresh marvel in their sound,  
 "Behold!  
 Behold!" saith He, "I stand at the door and knock."

Then said the parson: "What! and shall He wait,  
 And must He wait, not only till we say,  
 'Good Lord, the house is clean, the hearth is swept,  
 The children sleep, the mackerel-boats are in,  
 And all the nets are mended; therefore I  
 Will slowly to the door and open it;' But must He also wait where still, behold!

He stands and knocks, while we do say,  
 'Good Lord,  
 The gentlefolk are come to worship  
 here,  
 And I will up and open to Thee soon;  
 But first I pray a little longer wait,  
 For I am taken up with them; my eyes  
 Must needs regard the fashion of their  
 clothes,  
 And count the gains I think to make  
 by them;  
 Forsooth, they are of much account,  
 good Lord!  
 Therefore have patience with me —  
 wait, dear Lord!  
 Or come again?'

"What! must He wait for THIS —  
 For this? Ay, He doth wait for this,  
 and still,  
 Waiting for this, He, patient, railleth  
 not;  
 Waiting for this, e'en this He saith,  
 'Behold!  
 I stand at the door and knock.'

"O patient hand!  
 Knocking and waiting — knocking in  
 the night  
 When work is done! I charge you, by  
 the sea  
 Whereby you fill your children's  
 mouths, and by  
 The might of Him that made it — fish-  
 ermen!  
 I charge you, mothers! by the mother's  
 milk  
 He drew, and by His Father, God  
 over all,  
 Blessed for ever, that ye answer Him!  
 Open the door with shame, if ye have  
 sinned;  
 If ye be sorry, open it with sighs.  
 Albeit the place be bare for poverty,  
 And comfortless for lack of plenishing,  
 Be not abashed for that, but open it,  
 And take Him in that comes to sup  
 with thee;  
 'Behold!' He saith, 'I stand at the  
 door and knock.'

"Now, hear me: there be troubles in  
 this world

That no man can escape, and there is  
 one  
 That lieth hard and heavy on my soul,  
 Concerning that which is to come: —

I say  
 As a man that knows what earthly  
 trouble means,  
 I will not bear this ONE — I cannot  
 bear

This ONE — I cannot bear the weight  
 of you —

You — every one of you, body and soul;  
 You, with the care you suffer, and the  
 loss

That you sustain; you, with the grow-  
 ing up

To peril, maybe with the growing old  
 To want, unless before I stand with  
 you

At the great white throne, I may be  
 free of all,

And utter to the full what shall dis-  
 charge

Mine obligation: nay, I will not wait  
 A day, for every time the black clouds  
 rise,

And the gale freshens, still I search  
 my soul

To find if there be aught that can per-  
 suade

To good, or aught forsooth that can  
 beguile

From evil, that I (miserable man!  
 If that be so) have left unsaid, undone.

"So that when any risen from sunken  
 wrecks,

Or rolled in by the billows to the edge  
 Of the everlasting strand, what time  
 the sea

Gives up her dead, shall meet me, they  
 may say

Never, 'Old man, you told us not of  
 this;

You left us fisher-lads that had to toil  
 Ever in danger of the secret stab  
 Of rocks, far deadlier than the dagger;  
 winds

Of breath more murderous than the  
 cannon's; waves

Mighty to rock us to our death; and  
 gulfs

Ready beneath to suck and swallow us  
 in:

This crime be on your head; and as  
for us —

What shall we do?" but rather — nay,  
not so,

I will not think it; I will leave the  
dead,

Appealing but to life: I am afraid  
Of you, but not so much if you have  
sinned

As for the doubt if sin shall be forgiven.  
The day was, I have been afraid of  
pride —

Hard man's hard pride; but now I am  
afraid

Of man's humility. I counsel you,  
By the great God's great humbleness,  
and by

His pity, be not humble over-much.  
See! I will show at whose unopened  
doors

He stands and knocks, that you may  
never say,

'I am too mean, too ignorant, too lost;  
He knocks at other doors, but not at  
mine.'

"See here! it is the night! it is the  
night!

And snow lies thickly, white untrodden  
snow,

And the wan moon upon a casement  
shines —

A casement crusted o'er with frosty  
leaves,

That make her ray-less bright along the  
floor.

A woman sits, with hands upon her  
knees,

Poor tired soul! and she has nought to  
do,

For there is neither fire nor candle  
light:

The driftwood ash lies cold upon her  
hearth;

The rushlight flickered down an hour  
ago;

Her children wail a little in their sleep  
For cold and hunger; and, as if that  
sound

Was not enough, another comes to her,  
Over God's undefiled snow — a song —

Nay, never hang your heads — I say, a  
song.

"And doth she curse the alehouse,  
and the sots,

That drink the night out and their earn-  
ings there,

And drink their manly strength and  
courage down,

And drink away the little children's  
bread,

And starve her, starving by the self-  
same act

Her tender suckling, that with piteous  
eyes

Looks in her face, till scarcely she has  
heart

To work and earn the scanty bit and  
drop

That feed the others?

"Does she curse the song?

I think not, fishermen; I have not  
heard

Such women curse. God's curse is  
curse enough.

To-morrow she will say a bitter thing,  
Pulling her sleeve down lest the bruises  
show —

A bitter thing, but meant for an ex-  
cuse —

'My master is not worse than many  
men:'

But now, ay, now she sitteth dumb and  
still;

No food, no comfort, cold and poverty  
Bearing her down.

"My heart is sore for her;

How long, how long? When troubles  
come of God,

When men are frozen out of work,  
when wives

Are sick, when working fathers fail and  
die,

When boats go down at sea — then  
naught behooves

Like patience; but for troubles wrought  
of men

Patience is hard — I tell you it is hard.

"O thou poor soul! it is the night —  
the night;

Against thy door drifts up the silent  
snow,

Blocking thy threshold: 'Fall,' thou  
sayest, 'fall, fall,

Cold snow, and lie and be trod under-foot.  
 Am not I fallen? wake up and pipe,  
 O wind,  
 Dull wind, and beat and bluster at my door:  
 Merciful wind, sing me a hoarse rough song,  
 For there is other music made to-night  
 That I would fain not hear. Wake,  
 thou still sea,  
 Heavily plunge. Shoot on, white waterfall.  
 O, I could long like thy cold icicles  
 Freeze, freeze, and hang upon the frosty clift  
 And not complain, so I might melt at last  
 In the warm summer sun, as thou wilt do!

“But woe is me! I think there is no sun;  
 My sun is sunken, and the night grows dark:  
 None care for me. The children cry for bread,  
 And I have none, and naught can comfort me;  
 Even if the heavens were free to such as I,  
 It were not much, for death is long to wait,  
 And heaven is far to go!”

“And speak'st thou thus,  
 Despairing of the sun that sets to thee,  
 And of the earthly love that wanes to thee,  
 And of the heaven that lieth far from thee?  
 Peace, peace, fond fool! One draweth near thy door  
 Whose footsteps leave no print across the snow:  
 Thy sun has risen with comfort in his face,  
 The smile of heaven, to warm thy frozen heart  
 And bless with saintly hand. What! is it long  
 To wait, and far to go? Thou shalt not go;

Behold, across the snow to thee He comes,  
 Thy heaven descends; and is it long to wait?  
 Thou shalt not wait: ‘This night, this night,’ He saith,  
 ‘I stand at the door and knock.’

“It is enough — can such an one be here —  
 Yea, here? O God forgive you, fishermen!  
 One! is there only one? But do thou know,  
 O woman pale for want, if thou art here,  
 That on thy lot much thought is spent in heaven;  
 And, coveting the heart a hard man broke,  
 One standeth patient, watching in the night,  
 And waiting in the day-time.

“What shall be  
 If thou wilt answer? He will smile on thee;  
 One smile of His shall be enough to heal  
 The wound of man's neglect; and He will sigh,  
 Pitying the trouble which that sigh shall cure;  
 And He will speak — speak in the desolate night,  
 In the dark night: ‘For me a thorny crown  
 Men wove, and nails were driven in my hands  
 And feet: there was an earthquake, and I died;  
 I died, and am alive for evermore.

“‘I died for thee; for thee I am alive,  
 And my humanity doth mourn for thee,  
 For thou art mine; and all thy little ones,  
 They, too, are mine, are mine. Behold, the house  
 Is dark, but there is brightness where the sons  
 Of God are singing; and, behold, the heart



Is troubled: yet the nations walk in  
white;

They have forgotten how to weep; and  
thou

Shalt also come, and I will foster thee  
And satisfy thy soul; and thou shalt  
warm

Thy trembling life beneath the smile of  
God.

A little while — it is a little while —  
A little while, and I will comfort thee;  
I go away, but I will come again.'

"But hear me yet. There was a poor  
old man

Who sat and listened to the raging sea,  
And heard it thunder, lunging at the  
cliffs

As like to tear them down. He lay at  
night;

And 'Lord have mercy on the lads,'  
said he,

'That sailed at noon, though they be  
none of mine!

For when the gale gets up, and when  
the wind

Flings at the window, when it beats  
the roof,

And lulls, and stops, and rouses up  
again,

And cuts the crest clean off the plung-  
ing wave,

And scatters it like feathers up the field,  
Why, then I think of my two lads: my  
lads

That would have worked and never let  
me want,

And never let me take the parish pay.  
No, none of mine; my lads were  
drowned at sea —

My two — before the most of these  
were born.

I know how sharp that cuts, since my  
poor wife

Walked up and down, and still walked  
up and down,

And I walked after, and one could not  
hear

A word the other said, for wind and  
sea

That raged and beat and thundered in  
the night —

The awfulest, the longest, lightest  
night

That ever parents had to spend — a  
moon

That shone like daylight on the break-  
ing wave.

Ah me! and other men have lost their  
lads,

And other women wiped their poor  
dead mouths,

And got them home and dried them in  
the house,

And seen the driftwood lie along the  
coast

That was a tidy boat but one day back,  
And seen next tide the neighbors gather  
it

To lay it on their fires.

Ay, I was strong  
And able-bodied — loved my work; —  
but now

I am a useless hull: 'tis time I sunk;  
I am in all men's way; I trouble them;

I am a trouble to myself: but yet  
I feel for mariners of stormy nights,

And feel for wives that watch ashore.

Ay, ay!  
If I had learning I would pray the Lord

To bring them in: but I'm no scholar,  
no;

Book-learning is a world too hard for  
me:

But I make bold to say, O Lord, good  
Lord,

I am a broken-down poor man, a fool  
To speak to Thee: but in the Book

'tis writ,  
As I hear say from others that can read,

How, when Thou camest, Thou didst  
love the sea,

And live with fisherfolk, whereby 'tis  
sure

Thou knowest all the peril they go  
through,

And all their trouble.

As for me, good Lord,  
I have no boat; I am too old, too old —  
My lads are drowned; I buried my poor  
wife;

My little lasses died so long ago  
That mostly I forget what they were  
like.

Thou knowest, Lord; they were such  
little ones

I know they went to thee, but I forget  
Their faces, though I missed them sore.

O Lord,  
 I was a strong man ; I have drawn good  
 food  
 And made good money out of Thy  
 great sea :  
 But yet I cried for them at nights ; and  
 now,  
 Although I be so old, I miss my lads,  
 And there be many folk this stormy  
 night  
 Heavy with fear for theirs. Merciful  
 Lord,  
 Comfort them ; save their honest boys,  
 their pride,  
 And let them hear next ebb the bless-  
 edest,  
 Best sound — the boat keels grating on  
 the sand.

“ ‘ I cannot pray with finer words : I  
 know  
 Nothing ; I have no learning, cannot  
 learn —  
 Too old, too old. They say I want for  
 naught,  
 I have the parish pay ; but I am dull  
 Of hearing, and the fire scarce warms  
 me through.  
 God save me — I have been a sinful  
 man —  
 And save the lives of them that still  
 can work,  
 For they are good to me ; ay, good to  
 me.  
 But, Lord, I am a trouble ! and I sit,  
 And I am lonesome, and the nights  
 are few  
 That any think to come and draw a  
 chair,  
 And sit in my poor place and talk  
 awhile.  
 Why should they come, forsooth ? Only  
 the wind  
 Knocks at my door, O long and loud it  
 knocks,  
 The only thing God made that has a  
 mind  
 To enter in.’ ”

“ Yea, thus the old man spake ;  
 These were the last words of his aged  
 mouth —

BUT ONE DID KNOCK. One came to  
 sup with him,  
 That humble, weak old man ; knocked  
 at his door  
 In the rough pauses of the laboring  
 wind.  
 I tell you that One knocked while it  
 was dark,  
 Save where their foaming passion had  
 made white  
 Those livid seething billows. What  
 He said  
 In that poor place where He did talk  
 awhile  
 I cannot tell ; but this I am assured,  
 That when the neighbors came the  
 morrow morn,  
 What time the wind had bated, and  
 the sun  
 Shone on the old man’s floor, they saw  
 the smile  
 He passed away in, and they said, ‘ He  
 looks  
 As he had woke and seen the face of  
 Christ,  
 And with that rapturous smile held out  
 his arms  
 To come to Him ! ’

“ Can such an one be here,  
 So old, so weak, so ignorant, so frail ?  
 The Lord be good to thee, thou poor  
 old man ;  
 It would be hard with thee if heaven  
 were shut  
 To such as have not learning ! Nay,  
 nay, nay,  
 He condescends to them of low estate ;  
 To such as are despised He cometh  
 down,  
 Stands at the door and knocks.

“ Yet bear with me.  
 I have a message ; I have more to say.  
 Shall sorrow win His pity, and not sin —  
 That burden ten times heavier to be  
 borne ?  
 What think you ? Shall the virtuous  
 have His care  
 Alone ? O virtuous women, think not  
 scorn,  
 For you may lift your faces every-  
 where ;

And now that it grows dusk, and I can  
see

None though they front me straight, I  
fain would tell

A certain thing to you. I say to *you* ;  
And if it doth concern you, as methinks  
It doth, then surely it concerneth all.

I say that there was once — I say not  
here —

I say that there was once a castaway,  
And she was weeping, weeping bitterly ;  
Kneeling, and crying with a heart-sick  
cry

That choked itself in sobs — ‘O my  
good name !

O my good name !’ And none did  
hear her cry !

Nay ; and it lightened, and the storm-  
bolts fell,

And the rain splashed upon the roof,  
and still

She, storm-tost as the storming ele-  
ments —

She cried with an exceeding bitter cry,  
‘O my good name !’ And then the  
thunder-cloud

Stooped low and burst in darkness over-  
head,

And rolled, and rocked her on her  
knees, and shook

The frail foundations of her dwelling-  
place.

But she — if any neighbor had come in  
(None did) : if any neighbors had come  
in,

They might have seen her crying on  
her knees,

And sobbing, ‘Lost, lost, lost !’ beat-  
ing her breast —

Her breast for ever pricked with cruel  
thorns,

The wounds whereof could neither balm  
assuage

Nor any patience heal — beating her  
brow,

Which ached, it had been bent so long  
to hide

From level eyes, whose meaning was  
contempt.

“O ye good women, it is hard to  
leave

The paths of virtue, and return again.

What if this sinner wept, and none of  
you

Comforted her ? And what if she did  
strive

To mend, and none of you believed her  
strife,

Nor looked upon her ? Mark, I do not  
say,

Though it was hard, you therefore were  
to blame

That she had aught against you, though  
your feet

Never drew near her door. But I be-  
seech

Your patience. Once in old Jerusalem  
A woman kneeled at consecrated feet,

Kissed them, and washed them with  
her tears.

What then ?

I think that yet our Lord is pitiful :  
I think I see the castaway e’en now !

And she is not alone : the heavy rain  
Splashes without, and sullen thunder

rolls,  
But she is lying at the sacred feet

Of One transfigured.

“And her tears flow down,

Down to her lips — her lips that kiss  
the print

Of nails ; and love is like to break her  
heart !

Love and repentance — for it still doth  
work

Sore in her soul to think, to think that  
she,

Even she, did pierce the sacred, sacred  
feet,

And bruise the thorn-crowned head.

“O Lord, our Lord,

How great is Thy compassion ! Come,  
good Lord,

For we will open. Come this night,  
good Lord ;

Stand at the door and knock.

“And is this all ?

Trouble, old age and simpleness, and  
sin —

This all ? It might be all some other  
night ;

But this night, if a voice said, ‘Give  
account

Whom hast thou with thee?' then  
 must I reply,  
 'Young manhood have I, beautiful  
 youth and strength,  
 Rich with all treasure drawn up from  
 the crypt  
 Where lies the learning of the ancient  
 world —  
 Brave with all thoughts that poets fling  
 upon  
 The strand of life, as driftweed after  
 storms:  
 Doubtless familiar with Thy mountain  
 heads,  
 And the dread purity of Alpine snows,  
 Doubtless familiar with Thy works con-  
 cealed  
 For ages from mankind — outlying  
 worlds,  
 And many moonèd spheres — and Thy  
 great store  
 Of stars, more thick than mealy dust  
 which here  
 Powders the pale leaves of auriculas.

“ ‘This do I know, but, Lord, I know  
 not more.

“ ‘Not more concerning them — con-  
 cerning Thee,  
 I know Thy bounty; where Thou giv-  
 est much  
 Standing without, if any call Thee in  
 Thou givest more.’ Speak, then, O  
 rich and strong:  
 Open, O happy young, ere yet the  
 hand  
 Of Him that knocks, wearied at last,  
 forbear;  
 The patient foot its thankless quest re-  
 frain,  
 The wounded heart for evermore with-  
 draw.”

I have heard many speak, but this one  
 man —  
 So anxious not to go to heaven alone —  
 This one man I remember, and his  
 look,  
 Till twilight overshadowed him. He  
 ceased,  
 And out in darkness with the fisher  
 folk

We passed and stumbled over mounds  
 of moss,  
 And heard, but did not see, the passing  
 beck.  
 Ah, graceless heart, would that it could  
 regain  
 From the dim storehouse of sensations  
 past  
 The impress full of tender awe, that  
 night,  
 Which fell on me! It was as if the  
 Christ  
 Had been drawn down from heaven to  
 track us home,  
 And any of the footsteps following us  
 Might have been His.

### A WEDDING SONG.

COME up the broad river, the Thames,  
 my Dane,  
 My Dane with the beautiful eyes!  
 Thousands and thousands await thee  
 full fain,  
 And talk of the wind and the skies.  
 Fear not from folk and from country to  
 part,  
 O, I swear it is wisely done;  
 For (I said) I will bear me by thee,  
 sweetheart,  
 As becometh my father's son.

Great London was shouting as I went  
 down.  
 “She is worthy,” I said, “of this;  
 What shall I give who have promised  
 a crown?  
 O, first I will give her a kiss.”  
 So I kissed her and brought her, my  
 Dane, my Dane,  
 Through the waving wonderful  
 crowd:  
 Thousands and thousands, they shouted  
 amain,  
 Like mighty thunders and loud.

And they said, “He is young, the lad  
 we love,  
 The heir of the Isles is young:  
 How we deem of his mother, and one  
 gone above,  
 Can neither be said nor sung.

He brings us a pledge — he will do his  
 part  
 With the best of his race and  
 name ; ” —  
 And I will, for I look to live, sweet-  
 heart,  
 As may suit with my mother's fame.

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### THE FOUR BRIDGES.

I LOVE this grey old church, the low,  
 long nave,  
 The ivied chancel and the slender  
 spire ;  
 No less its shadow on each heaving  
 grave,  
 With growing osier bound, or living  
 briar ;  
 I love those yew-tree trunks, where  
 stand arrayed  
 So many deep-cut names of youth and  
 maid.

A simple custom this — I love it well —  
 A carved betrothal and a pledge of  
 truth ;  
 How many an eve, their linked names  
 to spell,  
 Beneath the yew-trees sat our village  
 youth !  
 When work was over, and the new-cut  
 hay  
 Sent wafts of balm from meadows where  
 it lay.

Ah ! many an eve, while I was yet a  
 boy,  
 Some village hind has beckoned me  
 aside,  
 And sought mine aid, with shy and  
 awkward joy,  
 To carve the letters of his rustic bride,  
 And make them clear to read as graven  
 stone,  
 Deep in the yew-tree's trunk beside  
 his own.

For none could carve like me, and here  
 they stand,  
 Fathers and mothers of the present  
 race ;

And underscored by some less practised  
 hand,  
 That fain the story of its line would  
 trace,  
 With children's names, and number,  
 and the day  
 When any called to God have passed  
 away.

I look upon them, and I turn aside,  
 As oft when carving them I did ere-  
 while ;  
 And there I see those wooden bridges  
 wide  
 That cross the marshy hollow ; there  
 the stile  
 In reeds imbedded, and the swelling  
 down,  
 And the white road toward the distant  
 town.

But those old bridges claim another  
 look.  
 Our brattling river tumbles through  
 the one ;  
 The second spans a shallow, weedy  
 brook ;  
 Beneath the others, and beneath the  
 sun,  
 Lie two long stilly pools, and on their  
 breasts  
 Picture their wooden piles, encased in  
 swallows' nests.

And round about them grows a fringe  
 of reeds,  
 And then a floating crown of lily  
 flowers,  
 And yet within small silver-budded  
 weeds ;  
 But each clear centre evermore em-  
 bowers  
 A deeper sky, where, stooping, you  
 may see  
 The little minnows darting restlessly.

My heart is bitter, lilies, at your sweet ;  
 Why did the dewdrop fringe your  
 chalices ?  
 Why in your beauty are you thus com-  
 plete,  
 You silver ships — you floating pal-  
 aces ?

O! if need be, you must allure man's  
eye,  
Yet wherefore blossom here? O why?  
O why?

O! O! the world is wide, you lily  
flowers,  
It hath warm forests, cleft by stilly  
pools,  
Where every night bathe crowds of  
stars; and bowers  
Of spicery hang over. Sweet air cools  
And shakes the lilies among those stars  
that lie:  
Why are not ye content to reign there?  
Why?

That chain of bridges, it were hard to  
tell  
How it is linked with all my early joy.  
There was a little foot that I loved well,  
It danced across them when I was a  
boy;  
There was a careless voice that used to  
sing;  
There was a child, a sweet and happy  
thing.

Oft through that matted wood of oak  
and birch  
She came from yonder house upon  
the hill;  
She crossed the wooden bridges to the  
church,  
And watched, with village girls, my  
boasted skill:  
But loved to watch the floating lilies  
best,  
Or linger, peering in a swallow's nest;

Linger and linger, with her wistful  
eyes  
Drawn to the lily-buds that lay so  
white  
And soft on crimson water; for the  
skies  
Would crimson, and the little cloud-  
lets bright  
Would all be flung among the flowers  
sheer down,  
To flush the spaces of their clustering  
crown.

Till the green rushes — O, so glossy  
green —

The rushes, they would whisper,  
rustle, shake;  
And forth on floating gauze, no jew-  
elled queen  
So rich, the green-eyed dragon-flies  
would break,  
And hover on the flowers — aërial  
things,  
With little rainbows flickering on their  
wings.

Ah! my heart dear! the polished pools  
lie still,  
Like lanes of water reddened by the  
west,  
Till, swooping down from yon o'er-  
hanging hill,  
The bold marsh harrier wets her  
tawny breast;  
We scared her oft in childhood from  
her prey,  
And the old eager thoughts rise fresh  
as yesterday.

To yonder copse by moonlight I did go,  
In luxury of mischief, half afraid,  
To steal the great owl's brood, her  
downy snow,  
Her screaming imps to seize, the  
while she preyed  
With yellow, cruel eyes, whose radiant  
glare,  
Fell with their mother rage, I might  
not dare.

Panting I lay till her great fanning wings  
Troubled the dreams of rock-doves,  
slumbering nigh,  
And she and her fierce mate, like evil  
things,  
Skimmed the dusk fields; then rising,  
with a cry  
Of fear, joy, triumph, darted on my  
prey,  
And tore it from the nest and fled away.

But afterward, belated in the wood,  
I saw her moping on the rifed tree,  
And my heart smote me for her, while  
I stood  
Awakened from my careless reverie;

So white she looked, with moonlight  
 round her shed,  
 So motherlike she drooped and hung  
 her head.

O that mine eyes would cheat me! I  
 behold  
 The godwits running by the water  
 edge,  
 The mossy bridges mirrored as of old;  
 The little curlews creeping from the  
 sedge,  
 But not the little foot so gayly light:  
 O that mine eyes would cheat me, that  
 I might! —

Would cheat me! I behold the gable-  
 ends —  
 Those purple pigeons clustering on  
 the cote;  
 The lane with maples overhung, that  
 bends  
 Toward her dwelling; the dry grassy  
 moat,  
 Thick mullions, diamond-latticed,  
 mossed and grey,  
 And walls banked up with laurel and  
 with bay.

And up behind them yellow fields of  
 corn,  
 And still ascending countless firry  
 spires,  
 Dry slopes of hills uncultured, bare,  
 forlorn,  
 And green in rocky clefts with whins  
 and briars;  
 Then rich cloud masses dyed the vio-  
 let's hue,  
 With orange sunbeams dropping swiftly  
 through.

Ay, I behold all this full easily;  
 My soul is jealous of my happier eyes,  
 And manhood envies youth. Ah,  
 strange to see,  
 By looking merely, orange-flooded  
 skies;  
 Nay, any dew-drop that may near me  
 shine:  
 But never more the face of Eglantine!

She was my one companion, being  
 herself  
 The jewel and adornment of my days,  
 My life's completeness. O, a smiling elf,  
 That I do but disparage with my  
 praise —  
 My playmate; and I loved her dearly  
 and long,  
 And she loved me, as the tender love  
 the strong.

Ay, but she grew, till on a time there  
 came  
 A sudden restless yearning to my  
 heart;  
 And as we went a-nesting, all for shame  
 And shyness, I did hold my peace,  
 and start;  
 Content departed, comfort shut me out,  
 And there was nothing left to talk about.

She had but sixteen years, and as for me,  
 Four added made my life. This  
 pretty bird,  
 This fairy bird that I had cherished —  
 she,  
 Content, had sung, while I, con-  
 tented, heard.  
 The song had ceased; the bird, with  
 nature's art,  
 Had brought a thorn and set it in my  
 heart.

The restless birth of love my soul op-  
 prest;  
 I longed and wrestled for a tranquil  
 day,  
 And warred with that disquiet in my  
 breast  
 As one who knows there is a better  
 way;  
 But, turned against myself, I still in vain  
 Looked for the ancient calm to come  
 again.

My tired soul could to itself confess  
 That she deserved a wiser love than  
 mine;  
 To love more truly were to love her less,  
 And for this truth I still awoke to  
 pine:  
 I had a dim belief that it would be  
 A better thing for her, a blessed thing  
 for me.

Good hast Thou made them — comforters right sweet ;

Good hast Thou made the world, to mankind lent ;

Good are Thy dropping clouds that feed the wheat ;

Good are Thy stars above the firmament.

Take to Thee, take, Thy worship, Thy renown ;

The good which Thou hast made doth wear Thy crown.

For, O my God, Thy creatures are so frail,

Thy bountiful creation is so fair,

That, drawn before us like the temple veil,

It hides the Holy Place from thought and care,

Giving man's eyes instead its sweeping fold,

Rich as with cherub wings and apples wrought of gold,

Purple and blue and scarlet — shimmering bells

And rare pomegranates on its broidered rim,

Glorious with chain and fret work that the swell

Of incense shakes to music dreamy and dim,

Till on a day comes loss, that God makes gain,

And death and darkness rend the veil in twain.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ah, sweetest ! my beloved ! each outward thing

Recalls my youth, and is instinct with thee ;

Brown wood-owls in the dusk, with noiseless wing,

Float from yon hanger to their haunted tree,

And hoot full softly. Listening, I regain

A flashing thought of thee with their remembered strain.

I will not pine — it is the careless brook,

These amber sunbeams slanting down the vale ;

It is the long tree-shadows, with their look

Of natural peace, that make my heart to fail :

The peace of nature — No, I will not pine —

But O the contrast 'twixt her face and mine !

And still I changed — I was a boy no more ;

My heart was large enough to hold my kind,

And all the world. As hath been oft before

With youth, I sought, but I could never find

Work hard enough to quiet my self-strife,

And use the strength of action-craving life.

She, too, was changed : her bountiful sweet eyes

Looked out full lovingly on all the world.

O tender as the deeps in yonder skies Their beaming ! but her rosebud lips

were curled

With the soft dimple of a musing smile, Which kept my gaze, but held me mute

the while.

A cast of bees, a slowly moving wain, The scent of bean-flowers wafted up

a dell,

Blue pigeons wheeling over fields of grain,

Or bleat of folded lamb, would please her well,

Or cooing of the early coted dove ; — She, sauntering, mused of these ; I, following, mused of love.

With her two lips, that one the other pressed

So poutingly with such a tranquil air, With her two eyes, that on my own

would rest

So dream-like, she denied my silent prayer,



Fronted unuttered words, and said them  
 nay,  
 And smiled down love till it had nought  
 to say.

The words that through mine eyes  
 would clearly shine  
 Hovered and hovered on my lips in  
 vain;  
 If after pause I said but "Eglantine,"  
 She raised to me her quiet eyelids  
 twain,  
 And looked me this reply — look calm,  
 yet bland —  
 "I shall not know, I will not under-  
 stand."

Yet she did know my story — knew my  
 life  
 Was wrought to hers with bindings  
 many and strong:  
 That I, like Israel, served for a wife,  
 And for the love I bare her thought  
 not long,  
 But only a few days, full quickly told,  
 My seven years' service strict as his of  
 old.

I must be brief: the twilight shadows  
 grow,  
 And steal the rose-bloom genial sum-  
 mer sheds,  
 And scented wafts of wind that come  
 and go  
 Have lifted dew from honeyed clover-  
 heads;  
 The seven stars shine out above the mill,  
 The dark delightful woods lie veiled  
 and still.

Hush! hush! the nightingale begins  
 to sing,  
 And stops, as ill contented with her  
 note;  
 Then breaks from out the bush with  
 hurried wing,  
 Restless and passionate. She tunes  
 her throat,  
 Laments a while in wavering trills, and  
 then  
 Floods with a stream of sweetness all  
 the glen.

The seven stars upon the nearest pool  
 Lie trembling down betwixt the lily  
 leaves,  
 And move like glowworms; wafting  
 breezes cool  
 Come down along the water, and it  
 heaves  
 And bubbles in the sedge; while deep  
 and wide  
 The dim night settles on the country  
 side.

I know this scene by heart. O! once  
 before  
 I saw the seven stars float to and fro,  
 And stayed my hurried footsteps by the  
 shore  
 To mark the starry picture spread  
 below:  
 Its silence made the tumult in my breast  
 More audible; its peace revealed my  
 own unrest.

I paused, then hurried on; my heart  
 beat quick;  
 I crossed the bridges, reached the  
 steep ascent,  
 And climbed through matted fern and  
 hazels thick;  
 Then darkling through the close green  
 maples went,  
 And saw — there felt love's keenest  
 pangs begin —  
 An oriel window lighted from within:

I saw — and felt that they were scarcely  
 cares  
 Which I had known before. I drew  
 more near,  
 And O! methought how sore it frets  
 and wears  
 The soul to part with that it holds so  
 dear:  
 'Tis hard two woven tendrils to un-  
 twine,  
 And I was come to part with Eglantine.

For life was bitter through those words  
 repressed,  
 And youth was burdened with un-  
 spoken vows;

Love unrequited brooded in my breast,  
And shrank, at glance, from the be-  
loved brows :

And three long months, heart-sick, my  
foot withdrawn,  
I had not sought her side by rivulet,  
copse, or lawn —

Not sought her side, yet busy thought  
no less

Still followed in her wake, though far  
behind ;

And I, being parted from her loveliness,  
Looked at the picture of her in my  
mind :

I lived alone, I walked with soul op-  
prest,  
And ever sighed for her, and sighed for  
rest.

Then I had risen to struggle with my  
heart,

And said : " O heart ! the world is  
fresh and fair,

And I am young ; but this thy restless  
smart

Changes to bitterness the morning  
air :

I will, I must, these weary fetters  
break —

I will be free, if only for her sake.

" O let me trouble her no more with  
sighs !

Heart-healing comes by distance and  
with time :

Then let me wander, and enrich mine  
eyes

With the green forests of a softer  
clime,

Or list by night at sea the wind's low  
stave

And long monotonous rockings of the  
wave.

" Through open solitudes, unbounded  
meads,

Where, wading on breast-high in yel-  
low bloom,

Untamed of man, the shy white llama  
feeds —

There would I journey and forget my  
doom ;

Or far, O far as sunrise I would see  
The level prairie stretch away from  
me !

" Or I would sail upon the tropic seas,  
Where fathom long the blood-red  
dulces grow,

Droop from the rock and waver in the  
breeze,

Lashing the tide to foam ; while calm  
below

The muddy mandrakes throng those  
waters warm,

And purple, gold, and green, the living  
blossoms swarm."

So of my father I did win consent,  
With importunities repeated long,  
To make that duty which had been my  
bent,

To dig with strangers alien tombs  
among,

And bound to them through desert  
leagues to pace,

Or track up rivers to their starting-  
place.

For this I had done battle and had won,  
But not alone to tread Arabian sands,

Measure the shadows of a southern sun,  
Or dig out gods in the old Egyptian  
lands ;

But for the dream wherewith I thought  
to cope —

The grief of love unmated with love's  
hope.

And now I would set reason in array,  
Methought, and fight for freedom  
manfully,

Till by long absence there would come  
a day

When this my love would not be pain  
to me ;

But if I knew my rosebud fair and blest  
I should not pine to wear it on my  
breast.

The days fled on ; another week should  
fling

A foreign shadow on my lengthening  
way ;

Another week, yet nearness did not  
bring  
A braver heart that hard farewell to  
say.

I let the last day wane, the dusk begin,  
Ere I had sought that window lighted  
from within.

Sinking and sinking, O my heart! my  
heart!

Will absence heal thee whom its  
shade doth rend?

I reached the little gate, and soft within  
The oriel fell her shadow. She did  
lend

Her loveliness to me, and let me share  
The listless sweetness of those features  
fair.

Among thick laurels in the gathering  
gloom,

Heavy for this our parting, I did  
stand;

Beside her mother in the lighted room,  
She sitting leaned her cheek upon  
her hand;

And as she read, her sweet voice, float-  
ing through

The open casement, seemed to mourn  
me an adieu.

Youth! youth! how buoyant are thy  
hopes! they turn,

Like marigolds, toward the sunny  
side.

My hopes were buried in a funeral  
urn,

And they sprang up like plants and  
spread them wide;

Though I had schooled and reasoned  
them away,

They gathered smiling near and prayed  
a holiday.

Ah, sweetest voice! how pensive were  
its tones,

And how regretful its unconscious  
pause!

"Is it for me her heart this sadness  
owns,

And is our parting of to-night the  
cause?

Ah, would it might be so!" I thought,  
and stood  
Listening entranced among the under-  
wood.

I thought it would be something worth  
the pain

Of parting, to look once in those deep  
eyes,

And take from them an answering look  
again.

"When eastern palms," I thought,  
"about me rise,

If I might carve our names upon the  
rind,

Betrothed, I would not mourn, though  
leaving thee behind."

I can be patient, faithful, and most fond  
To unacknowledged love; I can be  
true

To this sweet thralldom, this unequal  
bond,

This yoke of mine that reaches not  
to you:

O, how much more could costly parting  
buy —

If not a pledge, one kiss, or, failing that,  
a sigh!

I listened, and she ceased to read; she  
turned

Her face toward the laurels where I  
stood:

Her mother spoke — O wonder! hardly  
learned;

She said, "There is a rustling in the  
wood;

Ah, child! if one draw near to bid fare-  
well,

Let not thine eyes an unsought secret  
tell.

"My daughter, there is nothing held so  
dear

As love, if only it be hard to win.

The roses that in yonder hedge appear  
Outdo our garden-buds which bloom

within;

But since the hand may pluck them  
every day,

Unmarked they bud, bloom, drop, and  
drift away.

"My daughter, my beloved, be not  
you  
Like those same roses." O bewildering  
word!

My heart stood still, a mist obscured  
my view:

It cleared; still silence. No denial  
stirred

The lips beloved; but straight, as one  
opprest,

She, kneeling, dropped her face upon  
her mother's breast.

This said, "My daughter, sorrow  
comes to all;

Our life is checked with shadows  
manifold:

But woman has this more — she may  
not call

Her sorrow by its name. Yet love  
not told,

And only born of absence and by  
thought,

With thought and absence may return  
to thought."

And my beloved lifted up her face,

And moved her lips as if about to  
speak;

She dropped her lashes with a girlish  
grace,

And the rich damask mantled in her  
cheek:

I stood awaiting till she should deny

Her love, or with sweet laughter put it  
by.

But, closer nestling to her mother's  
heart,

She, blushing, said no word to break  
my trance,

For I was breathless; and, with lips  
apart,

Felt my breast pant and all my pulses  
dance,

And strove to move, but could not for  
the weight

Of unbelieving joy, so sudden and so  
great,

Because she loved me. With a mighty  
sigh

Breaking away, I left her on her  
knees,

And blest the laurel bower, the dark-  
ened sky,

The sultry night of August. Through  
the trees,

Giddy with gladness, to the porch I  
went,

And hardly found the way for joyful  
wonderment.

Yet, when I entered, saw her mother  
sit

With both hands cherishing the  
graceful head,

Smoothing the clustered hair, and part-  
ing it

From the fair brow; she, rising, only  
said,

In the accustomed tone, the accustomed  
word,

The careless greeting that I always  
heard;

And she resumed her merry, mocking  
smile,

Though tear-drops on the glistening  
lashes hung.

O woman! thou wert fashioned to be-  
guile;

So have all sages said, all poets sung.

She spoke of favoring winds and wait-  
ing ships,

With smiles of gratulation on her lips!

And then she looked and faltered: I  
had grown

So suddenly in life and soul a man:

She moved her lips, but could not find  
a tone

To set her mocking music to; began

One struggle for dominion, raised her  
eyes,

And straight withdrew them, bashful  
through surprise.

The color over cheek and bosom  
flushed;

I might have heard the beating of her  
heart,

But that mine own beat louder; when  
she blushed,

The hand within mine own I felt to  
start,

But would not change my pitiless decree  
To strive with her for might and mastery.

She looked again, as one that, half afraid,  
Would fain be certain of a doubtful thing;  
Or one beseeching, "Do not me upbraid!"

And then she trembled like the fluttering  
Of timid little birds, and silent stood,  
No smile wherewith to mock my hardihood.

She turned, and to an open casement moved  
With girlish shyness, mute beneath my gaze,  
And I on downcast lashes unproved  
Could look as long as pleased me; while, the rays  
Of moonlight round her, she her fair head bent,  
In modest silence to my words attent.

How fast the giddy whirling moments flew!

The moon had set; I heard the midnight chime;  
Hope is more brave than fear, and joy than dread,  
And I could wait unmoved the parting time.

It came; for by a sudden impulse drawn,  
She, risen, stepped out upon the dusky lawn.

A little waxen taper in her hand,  
Her feet upon the dry and dewless grass,  
She looked like one of the celestial band,  
Only that on her cheeks did dawn and pass  
Most human blushes; while, the soft light thrown  
On vesture pure and white, she seemed yet fairer grown.

Her mother, looking out toward her, sighed,  
Then gave her hand in token of farewell,  
And with her warning eyes, that seemed to chide,  
Scarce suffered that I sought her child to tell  
The story of my life, whose every line  
No other burden bore than—Eglantine.

Black thunder-clouds were rising up behind,  
The waxen taper burned full steadily;  
It seemed as if dark midnight had a mind  
To hear what lovers say, and her decree  
Had passed for silence, while she, dropped to ground  
With raiment floating wide, drank in the sound.

O happiness! thou dost not leave a trace  
So well defined as sorrow. Amber light,  
Shed like a glory, on her angel face,  
I can remember fully, and the sight  
Of her fair forehead and her shining eyes,  
And lips that smiled in sweet and girlish wise.

I can remember how the taper played  
Over her small hands and her vesture white;  
How it struck up into the trees, and laid  
Upon their under leaves unwonted light;  
And when she held it low, how far it spread  
O'er velvet pansies slumbering on their bed.

I can remember that we spoke full low,  
That neither doubted of the other's truth;  
And that with footsteps slower and more slow,  
Hands folded close for love, eyes wet for ruth:

Beneath the trees, by that clear taper's  
 flame,  
 We wandered till the gate of parting  
 came.

But I forget the parting words she said,  
 So much they thrilled the all-atten-  
 tive soul ;

For one short moment human heart and  
 head

May bear such bliss — its present is  
 the whole :

I had that present, till in whispers fell  
 With parting gesture her subdued fare-  
 well.

"Farewell !" she said, in act to turn  
 away,

But stood a moment still to dry her  
 tears,

And suffered my enfolding arm to stay  
 The time of her departure. O ye  
 years

That intervene betwixt that day and  
 this !

You all received your hue from that  
 keen pain and bliss.

O mingled pain and bliss ! O pain to  
 break

At once from happiness so lately  
 found,

And four long years to feel for her sweet  
 sake

The incompleteness of all sight and  
 sound !

But bliss to cross once more the foam-  
 ing brine —

O bliss to come again and make her  
 mine.

I cannot — O, I cannot more recall !

But I will soothe my troubled  
 thoughts to rest

With musing over journeyings wide,  
 and all

Observance of this active-humored  
 west,

And swarming cities steeped in eastern  
 day,

With swarthy tribes in gold and striped  
 array.

I turn from these, and straight there  
 will succeed  
 (Shifting and changing at the restless  
 will),

Imbedded in some deep Circassian  
 mead,

White wagon-tilts, and flocks that eat  
 their fill

Unseen above, while comely shepherds  
 pass,

And scarcely show their heads above  
 the grass.

— The red Sahara in an angry glow,  
 With amber fogs, across its hollows  
 trailed

Long strings of camels, gloomy-eyed  
 and slow,

And women on their necks, from  
 gazers veiled,

And sun-swart guides who toil across  
 the sand

To groves of date-trees on the watered  
 land.

Again — the brown sails of an Arab  
 boat,

Flapping by night upon a glassy sea,  
 Whereon the moon and planets seem  
 to float,

More bright of hue than they were  
 wont to be,

While shooting-stars rain down with  
 crackling sound,

And, thick as swarming locusts, drop  
 to ground.

Or far into the heat among the sands

The gembok nations, snuffing up the  
 wind,

Drawn by the scent of water — and the  
 bands

Of tawny-bearded lions pacing, blind  
 With the sun-dazzle 'in their midst, op-

prest

With prey, and spiritless for lack of rest !

What more ? Old Lebanon, the frosty-  
 browed,

Setting his feet among oil-olive trees,  
 Heaving his bare brown shoulder

through a cloud ;

And after, grassy Carmel, purple  
 seas,

Flattering his dreams and echoing in  
his rocks,  
Soft as the bleating of his thousand  
flocks.

Enough: how vain this thinking to  
beguile,  
With recollected scenes, an aching  
breast!  
Did not I, journeying, muse on her the  
while?  
Ah, yes! for every landscape comes  
impressed —  
Ay, written on, as by an iron pen —  
With the same thought I nursed about  
her then.

Therefore let memory turn again to  
home;  
Feel, as of old, the joy of drawing  
near;  
Watch the green breakers and the wind-  
tossed foam,  
And see the land-fog break, dissolve,  
and clear;  
Then think a skylark's voice far sweeter  
sound  
Than ever thrilled but over English  
ground;

And walk, glad, even to tears, among  
the wheat,  
Not doubting this to be the first of  
lands;  
And, while in foreign words this mur-  
muring, meet  
Some little village school-girls (with  
their hands  
Full of forget-me-nots), who, greeting  
me,  
I count their English talk delightful  
melody;

And seat me on a bank, and draw them  
near,  
That I may feast myself with hear-  
ing it,  
Till shortly they forget their bashful  
fear,  
Push back their flaxen curls, and  
round me sit —

Tell me their names, their daily tasks,  
and show  
Where wild wood strawberries in the  
copses grow.

So passed the day in this delightful  
land:  
My heart was thankful for the Eng-  
lish tongue —  
For English sky with feathery cloudlets  
spanned —  
For English hedge with glistening  
dewdrops hung.  
I journeyed, and at glowing eventide  
Stopped at a rustic inn by the wayside.

That night I slumbered sweetly, being  
right glad  
To miss the flapping of the shrouds;  
but lo!  
A quiet dream of beings twain I had,  
Behind the curtain talking soft and  
low:  
Methought I did not heed their utter-  
ance fine,  
Till one of them said softly, "Eglan-  
tine."

I started up awake, 'twas silence all:  
My own fond heart had shaped that  
utterance clear;  
And "Ah!" methought, "how sweetly  
did it fall,  
Though but in dream, upon the listen-  
ing ear!  
How sweet from other lips the name  
well known —  
That name, so many a year heard only  
from mine own!"

I thought awhile, then slumber came to  
me,  
And tangled all my fancy in her maze,  
And I was drifting on a raft at sea,  
The near all ocean, and the far all  
haze;  
Through the white polished water  
sharks did glide,  
And up in heaven I saw no stars to  
guide.

"Have mercy, God!" but lo! my raft  
uprose;

Drip, drip, I heard the water splash  
from it;

My raft had wings, and as the petrel  
goes,

It skimmed the sea, then brooding  
seemed to sit

The milk-white mirror, till, with sudden  
spring,

It flew straight upward like a living  
thing.

But strange! — I went not also in that  
flight,

For I was entering at a cavern's  
mouth;

Trees grew within, and screaming birds  
of night

Sat on them, hiding from the torrid  
south.

On, on I went, while gleaming in the  
dark

Those trees with blanchèd leaves stood  
pale and stark.

The trees had flower-buds, nourished  
in deep night,

And suddenly, as I went farther in,  
They opened, and they shot out lam-  
bent light;

Then all at once arose a railing din  
That frightened me: "It is the ghosts,"  
I said,

"And they are railing for their darkness  
fled.

"I hope they will not look me in the  
face;

It frighteth me to hear their laughter  
loud;"

I saw them troop before with jaunty  
pace,

And one would shake off dust that  
soiled her shroud:

But now, O joy unhopèd! to calm my  
dread,

Some moonlight filtered through a cleft  
o'erhead.

I climbed the lofty trees — the blanchèd  
trees —

The cleft was wide enough to let me  
through;

I clambered out and felt the balmy  
breeze,

And stepped on churchyard grasses  
wet with dew.

O happy chance! O fortune to admire!  
I stood beside my own loved village  
spire.

And as I gazed upon the yew-tree's  
trunk,

Lo, far-off music — music in the night!  
So sweet and tender as it swelled and  
sunk;

It charmed me till I wept with keen  
delight,

And in my dream, methought as it drew  
near

The very clouds in heaven stooped low  
to hear.

Beat high, beat low, wild heart so  
deeply stirred,

For high as heaven runs up the  
piercing strain;

The restless music fluttering like a bird  
Bemoaned herself, and dropped to  
earth again,

Heaping up sweetness till I was afraid  
That I should die of grief when it did  
fade.

And it DID fade; but while with eager  
ear

I drank its last long echo dying away,  
I was aware of footsteps that drew near,

And round the ivied chancel seemed  
to stray:

O, soft above the hallowed place they  
trod —

Soft as the fall of foot that is not shod!

I turned — 'twas even so — yes, Eglan-  
tine!

For at the first I had divined the  
same;

I saw the moon on her shut eyelids  
shine,

And said, "She is asleep:" still on  
she came;

Then, on her dimpled feet, I saw it  
gleam,

And thought, "I know that this is  
but a dream."



My darling! O my darling! not the less  
My dream went on because I knew  
it such:

She came towards me in her loveliness —

A thing too pure, methought, for  
mortal touch;

The rippling gold did on her bosom  
meet,

The long white robe descended to her  
feet.

The fringed lids dropped low, as sleep-  
oppressed;

Her dreamy smile was very fair to see,  
And her two hands were folded to her  
breast,

With somewhat held between them  
heedfully.

O fast asleep! and yet methought she  
knew

And felt my nearness those shut eyelids  
through.

She sighed: my tears ran down for  
tenderness —

“And have I drawn thee to me in  
my sleep?

Is it for me thou wanderest shelterless,  
Wetting thy steps in dewy grasses  
deep?

O if this be!” I said — “yet speak to  
me;

I blame my very dream for cruelty.”

Then from her stainless bosom she did  
take

Two beauteous lily flowers that lay  
therein,

And with slow-moving lips a gesture  
make,

As one that some forgotten words  
doth win:

“They floated on the pool,” methought  
she said,

And water trickled from each lily’s  
head.

It dropped upon her feet — I saw it  
gleam

Along the ripples of her yellow hair,  
And stood apart, for only in a dream

She would have come, methought, to  
meet me there.

She spoke again — “Ah fair! ah fresh  
they shine!

And there are many left, and these are  
mine.”

I answered her with flattering accents  
meet —

“Love, they are whitest lilies e’er  
were blown.”

“And sayest thou so?” she sighed in  
murmurs sweet;

“I have nought else to give thee now,  
mine own!

For it is night. Then take them,  
love!” said she:

“They have been costly flowers to thee  
— and me.”

While thus she said I took them from  
her hand,

And, overcome with love and near-  
ness, woke;

And overcome with ruth that she should  
stand

Barefooted on the grass; that, when  
she spoke,

Her mystic words should take so sweet  
a tone,

And of all names her lips should choose  
“My own.”

I rose, I journeyed, neared my home,  
and soon

Beheld the spire peer out above the  
hill:

It was a sunny harvest afternoon,

When by the churchyard wicket,  
standing still,

I cast my eager eyes abroad to know

If change had touched the scenes of  
long ago.

I looked across the hollow; sunbeams  
shone

Upon the old house with the gable-  
ends:

“Save that the laurel-trees are taller  
grown,

No change,” methought, “to its grey  
wall extends.

What clear bright beams on yonder lat-  
tice shine!

There did I sometime talk with Eglan-  
tine.’

There standing with my very goal in sight,  
 Over my haste did sudden quiet steal ;  
 I thought to dally with my own delight,  
 Nor rush on headlong to my garnered weal,  
 But taste the sweetness of a short delay,  
 And for a little moment hold the bliss at bay.

The church was open ; it perchance might be  
 That there to offer thanks I might essay,  
 Or rather, as I think, that I might see  
 The place where Eglantine was wont to pray.  
 But so it was ; I crossed that portal wide,  
 And felt my riot joy to calm subside.

The low depending curtains, gently swayed,  
 Cast over arch and roof a crimson glow ;  
 But, ne'ertheless, all silence and all shade  
 It seemed, save only for the rippling flow  
 Of their long foldings, when the sunset air  
 Sighed through the casements of the house of prayer.

I found her place, the ancient oaken stall,  
 Where in her childhood I had seen her sit,  
 Most saint-like and most tranquil there of all,  
 Folding her hands, as if a dreaming fit —  
 A heavenly vision had before her strayed  
 Of the Eternal Child in lowly manger laid.

I saw her prayer-book laid upon the seat,  
 And took it in my hand, and felt more near

In fancy to her, finding it most sweet  
 To think how very oft, low kneeling here,  
 In her devout thoughts she had let me share,  
 And set my graceless name in her pure prayer.

My eyes were dazzled with delightful tears —  
 In sooth they were the last I ever shed ;  
 For with them fell the cherished dreams of years.  
 I looked, and on the wall above my head,  
 Over her seat, there was a tablet placed,  
 With one word only on the marble traced. —

Ah, well ! I would not overstate that woe,  
 For I have had some blessings, little care ;  
 But since the falling of that heavy blow,  
 God's earth has never seemed to me so fair ;  
 Nor any of His creatures so divine,  
 Nor sleep so sweet : — the word was —  
 EGLANTINE.

## A MOTHER SHOWING THE PORTRAIT OF HER CHILD.

(F. M. L.)

LIVING CHILD or pictured cherub  
 Ne'er o'ermatched its baby grace ;  
 And the mother, moving nearer,  
 Looked it calmly in the face ;  
 Then with slight and quiet gesture,  
 And with lips that scarcely smiled,  
 Said, "A Portrait of my daughter  
 When she was a child."

Easy thought was hers to fathom,  
 Nothing hard her glance to read,  
 For it seemed to say, "No praises  
 For this little child I need :

If you see, I see far better,  
And I will not feign to care  
For a stranger's prompt assurance  
That the face is fair."

Softly clasped and half extended,  
She her dimpled hands doth lay:  
So they doubtless placed them, saying,  
"Little one, you must not play."  
And while yet his work was growing,  
This the painter's hand hath shown,  
That the little heart was making  
Pictures of its own.

Is it warm in that green valley,  
Vale of childhood, where you dwell?  
Is it calm in that green valley,  
Round whose bourns such great  
hills swell?  
Are there giants in the valley —  
Giants leaving footprints yet?  
Are there angels in the valley?  
Tell me — I forget.

Answer, answer, for the lilies,  
Little one, o'ertop you much,  
And the mealy gold within them  
You can scarcely reach to touch;  
O how far their aspect differs,  
Looking up and looking down!  
You look up in that green valley —  
Valley of renown.

Are there voices in the valley,  
Lying near the heavenly gate?  
When it opens, do the harp-strings,  
Touched within, reverberate?  
When, like shooting-stars, the angels  
To your couch at nightfall go,  
Are their swift wings heard to rustle?  
Tell me! for you know.

Yes, you know; and you are silent,  
Not a word shall asking win;  
Little mouth more sweet than rosebud,  
Fast it locks the secret in.  
Not a glimpse upon your present  
You unfold to glad my view;  
Ah, what secrets of your future.  
I could tell to you!

Sunny present! thus I read it,  
By remembrance of my past: —  
Its to-day and its to-morrow  
Are as lifetimes vague and vast;  
And each face in that green valley  
Takes for you an aspect mild,  
And each voice grows soft in saying,  
"Kiss me, little child!"

As a boon the kiss is granted:  
Baby mouth, your touch is sweet,  
Takes the love without the trouble  
From those lips that with it meet;  
Gives the love, O pure! O tender!  
Of the valley where it grows,  
But the baby heart receiveth  
MORE THAN IT BESTOWS.

Comes the future to the present —  
"Ah!" she saith, "too blithe of  
mood;  
Why that smile which seems to whis-  
per —  
'I am happy, God is good?'  
God is good: that truth eternal  
Sown for you in happier years,  
I must tend it in my shadow,  
Water it with tears.

"Ah, sweet present! I must lead thee  
By a daylight more subdued;  
There must teach thee low to whis-  
per —  
'I am mournful, God is good!'"  
Peace, thou future! clouds are coming,  
Stooping from the mountain crest,  
But that sunshine floods the valley:  
Let her — let her rest.

Comes the future to the present —  
"Child," she saith, "and wilt thou  
rest?  
How long, child, before thy footsteps  
Fret to reach yon cloudy crest?  
Ah, the valley! — angels guard it,  
But the heights are brave to see;  
Looking down were long contentment:  
Come up, child, to me."

So she speaks, but do not heed her,  
Little maid with wondrous eyes,  
Not afraid, but clear and tender,  
Blue, and filled with prophecies;

Thou for whom life's veil unlifted  
 Hangs, whom warmest valleys fold,  
 Lift the veil, the charm dissolveth —  
 Climb, but heights are cold.

There are buds that fold within them,  
 Closed and covered from our sight,  
 Many a richly-tinted petal,  
 Never looked on by the light;  
 Fain to see their shrouded faces,  
 Sun and dew are long at strife,  
 Till at length the sweet buds open —  
 Such a bud is life.

When the rose of thine own being  
 Shall reveal its central fold,  
 Thou shalt look within and marvel,  
 Fearing what thine eyes behold;  
 What it shows and what it teaches  
 Are not things wherewith to part;  
 Thorny rose! that always costeth  
 Beatings at the heart.

Look in fear, for there is dimness;  
 Ills unshapen float anigh.  
 Look in awe: for this same nature  
 Once the Godhead deigned to die.  
 Look in love, for He doth love it,  
 And its tale is best of lore:  
 Still humanity grows dearer,  
 Being learned the more.

Learn, but not the less bethink thee  
 How that all can mingle tears;  
 But his joy can none discover,  
 Save to them that are his peers;  
 And that they whose lips do utter  
 Language such as bards have sung —  
 Lo! their speech shall be to many  
 As an unknown tongue.

Learn, that if to thee the meaning  
 Of all other eyes be shown,  
 Fewer eyes can ever front thee,  
 That are skilled to read thine own;  
 And that if thy love's deep current  
 Many another's far outflows,  
 Then thy heart must take for ever  
 LESS THAN IT BESTOWS.

## STRIFE AND PEACE.

Written for THE PORTFOLIO SOCIETY,  
 October, 1861.

THE yellow poplar leaves came down  
 And like a carpet lay,  
 No waftings were in the sunny air  
 To flutter them away;  
 And he stepped on blithe and deb-  
                   onair  
 That warm October day.

"The boy," saith he, "hath got his  
                   own,  
 But sore has been the fight,  
 For ere his life began the strife  
 That ceased but yesternight;  
 For the will," he said, "the kinsfolk  
                   read,  
 And read it not aright.

"His cause was argued in the court  
 Before his christening day;  
 And counsel was heard, and judge de-  
                   murred,  
 And bitter waxed the fray;  
 Brother with brother spake no word  
 When they met in the way.

"Against each one did each contend,  
 And all against the heir.  
 I would not bend, for I knew the end —  
 I have it for my share,  
 And nought repent, though my first  
                   friend  
 From henceforth I must spare.

"Manor and moor and farm and wold  
 Their greed begrudged him sore,  
 And parchments old with passionate  
                   hold  
 They guarded heretofore;  
 And they carped at signature and seal,  
 But they may carp no more.

"An old affront will stir the heart  
 Through years of rankling pain;  
 And I feel the fret that urged me yet  
 That warfare to maintain;  
 For an enemy's loss may well be set  
 Above an infant's gain.

"An enemy's loss I go to prove ;  
 Laugh out, thou little heir !  
 Laugh in his face who vowed to chase  
 Thee from thy birthright fair ;  
 For I come to set thee in thy place :  
 Laugh out, and do not spare."

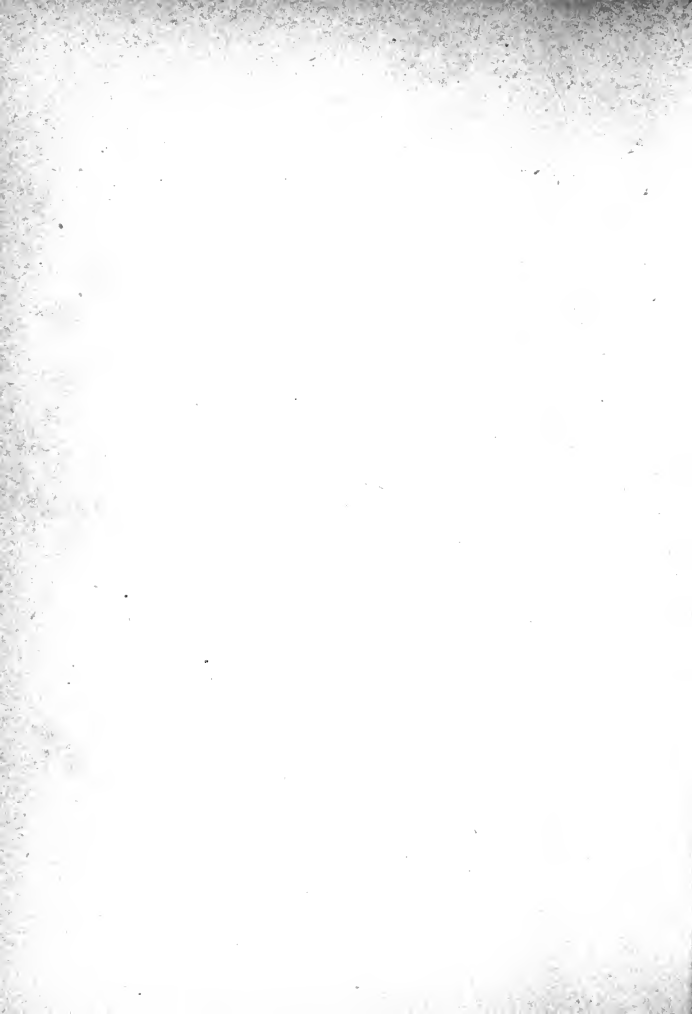
A man of strife, in wrathful mood  
 He neared the nurse's door ;  
 With poplar leaves the roof and eaves  
 Were thickly scattered o'er,  
 And yellow as they a sunbeam lay  
 Along the cottage floor.

"Sleep on, thou pretty, pretty lamb,"  
 He hears the fond nurse say ;  
 "And if angels stand at thy right hand,  
 As now belike they may,  
 And if angels meet at thy bed's feet,  
 I fear them not this day.

"Come wealth, come want to thee,  
 dear heart,  
 It was all one to me,  
 For thy pretty tongue far sweeter rung  
 Than coined gold and fee ;  
 And ever the while thy waking smile  
 It was right fair to see.

"Sleep, pretty bairn, and never know  
 Who grudged and who transgressed ;  
 Thee to retain I was full fain,  
 But God, He knoweth best !  
 And His peace upon thy brow lies plain  
 As the sunshine on thy breast !"

The man of strife, he enters in,  
 Looks, and his pride doth cease ;  
 Anger and sorrow shall be to-morrow  
 Trouble, and no release ;  
 But the babe whose life awoke the  
 strife  
 Hath entered into peace.



A  
STORY OF DOOM,  
*AND OTHER POEMS.*





## A STORY OF DOOM, AND OTHER POEMS.



### THE DREAMS THAT CAME TRUE.

I SAW in a vision once, our mother-  
sphere

The world, her fixed foredoomed  
oval tracing,  
Rolling and rolling on and resting  
never,

While like a phantom fell, behind  
her pacing  
The unfurled flag of night, her shadow  
dear

Fled as she fled and hung to her  
forever.

Great Heaven! methought, how  
strange a doom to share.

Would I may never bear  
Inevitable darkness after me  
(Darkness endowed with drawings  
strong,

And shadowy hands that cling un-  
endingly),  
Nor feel that phantom-wings behind  
me sweep,  
As she feels night pursuing through  
the long  
Illimitable reaches of "the vasty  
deep."

God save you, gentlefolks. There was  
a man

Who lay awake at midnight on his  
bed, [ran  
Watching the spiral flame that feeding

Among the logs upon his hearth, and  
shed  
A comfortable glow, both warm and  
dim,  
On crimson curtains that encom-  
passed him.

Right stately was his chamber, soft  
and white

The pillow, and his quilt was eider-  
down.

What mattered it to him through all  
that night

The desolate driving cloud might  
lower and frown,

And winds were up the eddying sleet  
to chase,

That drave and drave and found no  
settling-place?

What mattered it that leafless trees  
might rock,

Or snow might drift athwart his  
window-pane?

He bare a charmed life against their  
shock,

Secure from cold, hunger, and weath-  
er stain;

Fixed in his right, and born to good  
estate,

From common ills set by and separate.

From work and want and fear of want  
apart,

This man (men called him Justice  
Wilvermore) —

This man had comforted his cheerful  
heart

With all that it desired from every  
shore.

He had a right, — the right of gold is  
strong, —

He stood upon his right his whole life  
long.

Custom makes all things easy, and  
content

Is careless, therefore on the storm  
and cold,

As he lay waking, never a thought he  
spent,

Albeit across the vale beneath the  
wold,

Along a reedy mere that frozen lay,

A range of sordid hovels stretched  
away.

What cause had he to think on them,  
forsooth?

What cause that night beyond another  
night?

He was familiar even from his youth  
With their long ruin and their evil  
plight.

The wintry wind would search them  
like a scout,

The water froze within as freely as  
without.

He think upon them? No! They  
were forlorn,

So were the cowering inmates whom  
they held;

A thriftless tribe, to shifts and leanness  
born,

Ever complaining: infancy or eld  
Alike. But there was rent, or long ago

Those cottage roofs had met with over-  
throw.

For this they stood; and what his  
thoughts might be

This winter night, I know not; but  
I know

That, while the creeping flame fed  
silently

And cast upon his bed a crimson  
glow,

The Justice slept, and shortly in his  
sleep

He fell to dreaming, and his dream was  
deep.

He dreamed that over him a shadow  
came;

And when he looked to find the  
cause, behold

Some person knelt between him and  
the flame: —

A cowering figure of one frail and  
old, —

A woman; and she prayed as he de-  
scribed,

And spread her feeble hands, and  
shook and sighed.

“Good Heaven!” the Justice cried,  
and being distraught

He called not to her, but he looked  
again:

She wore a tattered cloak, but she had  
naught

Upon her head; and she did quake  
amain,

And spread her wasted hands and poor  
attire

To gather in the brightness of his fire.

“I know you, woman!” then the Jus-  
tice cried;

“I know that woman well,” he cried  
aloud;

“The shepherd Aveland’s widow:  
God me guide!

A pauper kneeling on my hearth:”  
and bowed

The hag, like one at home, its warmth  
to share!

“How dares she to intrude? What  
does she here?

“Ho, woman, ho!” — but yet she did  
not stir,

Though from her lips a fitful plaining  
broke;

“I’ll ring my people up to deal with  
her;

I’ll rouse the house,” he cried; but  
while he spoke

He turned, and saw, but distant from  
his bed,  
Another form, — a Darkness with a  
head.

Then, in a rage, he shouted, "Who  
are you?"

For little in the gloom he might dis-  
cern.

"Speak out; speak now; or I will  
make you rue

The hour!" but there was silence,  
and a stern,

Dark face from out the dusk appeared  
to lean,

And then again drew back, and was  
not seen.

"God!" cried the dreaming man,  
right impiously,

"What have I done, that these my  
sleep affray?"

"God!" said the Phantom, "I appeal  
to Thee,

Appoint Thou me this man to be my  
prey."

"God!" sighed the kneeling woman,  
frail and old,

"I pray Thee take me, for the world is  
cold."

Then said the trembling Justice, in af-  
fright,

"Fiend, I adjure thee, speak thine  
errand here!"

And lo! it pointed in the failing light  
Toward the woman, answering, cold

and clear,

"Thou art ordained an answer to thy  
prayer;

But first to tell *her* tale that kneeleth  
there."

"*Her* tale!" the Justice cried. "A  
pauper's tale!"

And he took heart at this so low be-  
hest,

And let the stoutness of his will pre-  
vail,

Demanding, "Is't for *her* you break  
my rest?"

She went to jail of late for stealing  
wood,

She will again for this, night's hardihood.

"I sent her; and to-morrow, as I live,  
I will commit her for this trespass  
here."

"Thou wilt not!" quoth the Shadow,  
"thou wilt give

Her story words;" and then it  
stalked anear

And showed a lowering face, and, dread  
to see,

A countenance of angered majesty.

Then said the Justice, all his thoughts  
astray,

With that material Darkness chiding  
him,

"If this must be, then speak to her, I  
pray,

And bid her move, for all the room  
is dim

By reason of the place she holds to-  
night:

She kneels between me and the warmth  
and light."

"With adjurations deep and drawings  
strong,

And with the power," it said, "unto  
me given,

I call upon thee, man, to tell thy  
wrong,

Or look no more upon the face of  
Heaven.

Speak! though she kneel throughout  
the livelong night,

And yet shall kneel between thee and  
the light."

This when the Justice heard, he raised  
his hands,

And held them as the dead in effigy  
Hold theirs, when carved upon a tomb.

The bands

Of fate had bound him fast: no  
remedy

Was left: his voice unto himself was  
strange,

And that unearthly vision did not  
change.

He said, "That woman dwells anear  
my door,

Her life and mine began the selfsame  
day,

And I am hale and hearty : from my store

I never spared her aught : she takes her way  
Of me unheeded ; pining, pinching care  
Is all the portion that she has to share.

"She is a broken-down, poor, friendless wight,

Through labor and through sorrow early old ;  
And I have known of this her evil plight,

Her scanty earnings, and her lodgment cold ;  
A patienter poor soul shall ne'er be found :

She labored on my land the long year round.

"What wouldst thou have me say, thou Fiend abhorred ?

Show me no more thine awful visage grim.

If thou obey'st a greater, tell thy lord  
That I have paid her wages. Cry to him !

He has not *much* against me. None can say

I have not paid her wages day by day.

"The spell ! It draws me. I must speak again ;

And speak against myself ; and speak aloud.

The woman once approached me to complain, —

'My wages are so low.' I may be proud ;

It is a fault." "Ay," quoth the Phantom fell,

"Sinner ! it is a fault : thou sayest well."

"She made her moan, 'My wages are so low.'"

"Tell on !" "She said," he answered, "'My best days

Are ended, and the summer is but slow To come ; and my good strength for work decays

By reason that I live so hard, and lie On winter nights so bare for poverty.'"

"And you replied," — began the lowering shade,

"And I replied," the Justice followed on,

"That wages like to mine my neighbor paid ;

And if I raised the wages of the one Straight should the others murmur ; furthermore,

The winter was as winters gone before.

"No colder and not longer." "Afterward?" —

The Phantom questioned. "Afterward," he groaned,

"She said my neighbor was a right good lord,

Never a roof was broken that he owned ;

He gave much coal and clothing. 'Doth he so?

Work for my neighbor, then,' I answered. 'Go !

"'You are full welcome.' Then she mumbled out

She hoped I was not angry ; hoped, forsooth,

I would forgive her : and I turned about,

And said I should be angry in good truth

If this should be again, or ever more She dared to stop me thus at the church door."

"Then?" quoth the Shade ; and he, constrained, said on,

"Then she, reproved, curtseyed herself away."

"Hast met her since?" it made demand anon ;

And after pause the Justice answered, "Ay ;

Some wood was stolen ; my people made a stir :

She was accused, and I did sentence her."

But yet, and yet, the dreaded questions came :

"And didst thou weigh the matter, — taking thought

Upon her sober life and honest fame?"

"I gave it," he replied, with gaze distraught;

"I gave it, Friend, the usual care; I took

The usual pains; I could not nearer look,

"Because — because their pilfering had got head.

What wouldst thou more? The neighbors pleaded hard, 'Tis true, and many tears the creature shed;

But I had vowed their prayers to disregard, Heavily strike the first that robbed my land,

And put down thieving with a steady hand.

"She said she was not guilty. Ay, 'tis true

She said so, but the poor are liars all. O thou fell Fiend, what wilt thou? Must I view

Thy darkness yet, and must thy shadow fall

Upon me miserable? I have done No worse, no more than many a scathless one."

"Yet," quoth the Shade, "if ever to thine ears

The knowledge of her blamelessness was brought, Or others have confessed with dying tears

The crime she suffered for, and thou hast wrought

All reparation in thy power, and told Into her empty hand thy brightest gold: —

"If thou hast honored her, and hast proclaimed

Her innocence and thy deplored wrong, Still thou art naught; for thou shalt yet be blamed

In that she, feeble, came before thee, strong,

And thou, in cruel haste to deal a blow,

Because thou hadst been angered, worked her woe.

"But didst thou right her? Speak!" The Justice sighed,

And beaded drops stood out upon his brow;

"How could I humble me," forlorn he cried,

"To a base beggar? Nay, I will avow

That I did ill. I will reveal the whole; I kept that knowledge in my secret soul."

"Hear him!" the Phantom muttered; "hear this man,

O changeless God upon the judgment throne."

With that, cold tremors through his pulses ran,

And lamentably he did make his moan;

While, with its arms upraised above his head,

The dim dread visitor approached his bed.

"Into these doors," it said, "which thou hast closed,

Daily this woman shall from henceforth come;

Her kneeling form shall yet be interposed,

Till all thy wretched hours have told their sum, —

Shall yet be interposed by day, by night,

Between thee, sinner, and the warmth and light.

"Remembrance of her want shall make thy meal

Like ashes, and thy wrong thou shalt not right.

But what! Nay, verily, nor wealth nor weal

From henceforth shall afford thy soul delight.

Till men shall lay thy head beneath the  
sod,  
There shall be no deliverance, saith my  
God."

"Tell me thy name," the dreaming  
Justice cried;

"By what appointment dost thou  
doom me thus?"

"'Tis well that thou shouldst know  
me," it replied,

"For mine thou art, and naught shall  
sever us;

From thine own lips and life I draw  
my force:

The name thy nation give me is RE-  
MORSE."

This when he heard, the dreaming  
man cried out,

And woke affrighted; and a crimson  
glow

The dying ember shed. Within, with-  
out,

In eddying rings the silence seemed  
to flow;

The wind had lulled, and on his fore-  
head shone

The last low gleam; he was indeed  
alone.

"O, I have had a fearful dream," said  
he;

"I will take warning and for mercy  
trust;

The fiend Remorse shall never dwell  
with me:

I will repair that wrong, I will be just,  
I will be kind, I will my ways amend."

*Now the first dream is told unto its  
end.*

Anigh the frozen mere a cottage stood,  
A piercing wind swept round and

shook the door,

The shrunken door, and easy way made  
good,

And drove long drifts of snow along  
the floor.

It sparkled there like diamonds, for the  
moon

Was shining in, and night was at the  
noon.

Before her dying embers, bent and pale,  
A woman sat because her bed was  
cold;

She heard the wind, the driving sleet  
and hail,

And she was hunger-bitten, weak,  
and old;

Yet while she cowered, and while the  
casement shook,

Upon her trembling knees she held  
a book—

A comfortable book for them that  
mourn,

And good to raise the courage of the  
poor;

It lifts the veil and shows, beyond the  
bourn,

Their Elder Brother, from His home  
secure,

That for them desolate He died to win,  
Repeating, "Come, ye blessed, enter  
in."

What thought she on, this woman? on  
her days

Of toil, or on the supperless night  
forlorn?

I think not so; the heart but seldom  
weighs

With conscious care a burden always  
borne;

And she was used to these things, had  
grown old

In fellowship with toil, hunger, and  
cold.

Then did she think how sad it was to  
live

Of all the good this world can yield  
bereft?

No, her untutored thoughts she did not  
give

To such a theme; but in their warp  
and weft

She wove a prayer: then in the mid-  
night deep

Faintly and slow she fell away to sleep.

A strange, a marvellous sleep, which  
brought a dream,

And it was this: that all at once she  
heard

The pleasant babbling of a little stream  
That ran beside her door, and then a  
bird

Broke out in songs. She looked, and  
lo! the rime

And snow had melted; it was summer time!

And all the cold was over, and the  
mere

Full sweetly swayed the flags and  
rushes green;

The mellow sunlight poured right warm  
and clear

Into her casement, and thereby were  
seen

Fair honeysuckle flowers, and wander-  
ing bees

Were hovering round the blossom-laden  
trees.

She said, "I will betake me to my  
door,

And will look out and see this won-  
drous sight,

How summer is come back, and frost  
is o'er,

And all the air warm waxen in a  
night."

With that she opened, but for fear she  
cried,

For lo! two Angels, — one on either  
side.

And while she looked, with marvelling  
measureless,

The Angels stood conversing face to  
face,

But neither spoke to her. "The wil-  
derness,"

One Angel said, "the solitary place,  
Shall yet be glad for Him." And then  
full fain

The other Angel answered, "He shall  
reign."

And when the woman heard, in won-  
dering wise,

She whispered, "They are speaking  
of my Lord."

And straightway swept across the open  
skies

Multitudes like to these. They took  
the word,

That flock of Angels, "He shall come  
again,  
My Lord, my Lord!" they sang,  
"and He shall reign!"

Then they, drawn up into the blue  
o'erhead,

Right happy, shining ones, made  
haste to flee;

And those before her one to other said,  
"Behold he stands aneath yon al-  
mond-tree."

This when the woman heard, she fain  
had gazed,

But paused for reverence, and bowed  
down amazed.

After she looked, for this her dream  
was deep;

She looked, and there was naught  
beneath the tree;

Yet did her love and longing overleap  
The fear of Angels, awful though  
they be,

And she passed out between the blessed  
things,

And brushed her mortal weeds against  
their wings.

O, all the happy world was in its best,  
The trees were covered thick with  
buds and flowers,

And these were dropping honey; for  
the rest,

Sweetly the birds were piping in  
their bowers;

Across the grass did groups of Angels  
go,

And Saints in pairs were walking to  
and fro.

Then did she pass toward the almond-  
tree,

And none she saw beneath it: yet  
each Saint

Upon his coming meekly bent the knee,  
And all their glory as they gazed  
waxed faint.

And then a lighting Angel neared the  
place,

And folded his fair wings before his  
face.

She also knelt, and spread her aged hands

As feeling for the sacred human feet ;  
She said, " Mine eyes are held, but if  
He stands

Anear, I will not let Him hence re-  
treat

Except He bless me." Then, O  
sweet! O fair!

Some words were spoken, but she  
knew not where.

She knew not if beneath the boughs  
they woke,

Or dropt upon her from the realms  
above ;

"What wilt thou, woman?" in the  
dream He spoke ;

"Thy sorrow moveth Me, thyself I  
love ;

Long have I counted up thy mournful  
years,

Once I did weep to wipe away thy  
tears."

She said: "My one Redeemer, only  
blest,

I know Thy voice, and from my  
yearning heart

Draw out my deep desire, my great  
request,

My prayer, that I might enter where  
Thou art.

Call me, O call from this world trouble-  
some,

And let me see Thy face." He an-  
swered, "Come."

*Here is the ending of the second  
dream.*

It is a frosty morning, keen and cold,  
Fast locked are silent mere and frozen  
stream,

And snow lies sparkling on the des-  
ert wold ;

With savory morning meats they spread  
the board,

But Justice Wilvermore will walk  
abroad.

"Bring me my cloak," quoth he, as  
one in haste.

"Before you breakfast, sir?" his  
man replies.

"Ay," quoth he, quickly, and he will  
not taste

Of aught before him, but in urgent  
wise,

As he would fain some carking care  
allay,

Across the frozen field he takes his  
way.

"A dream! how strange that it should  
move me so,

'Twas but a dream," quoth Justice  
Wilvermore:

"And yet I cannot peace nor pleasure  
know,

For wrongs I have not heeded here-  
tofore ;

Silver and gear the crone shall have of  
me,

And dwell for life in yonder cottage  
free.

"For visions of the night are fearful  
things,

Remorse is dread, though merely in  
a dream ;

I will not subject me to visitings

Of such a sort again. I will esteem  
My peace above my pride. From

natures rude

A little gold will buy me gratitude.

"The woman shall have leave to  
gather wood,

As much as she may need, the long  
year round ;

She shall, I say ; moreover, it were  
good

Yon other cottage roofs to render  
sound.

Thus to my soul the ancient peace re-  
store,

And sleep at ease," quoth Justice Wil-  
vermore.

With that he nears the door: a frosty  
rime

Is branching over it, and drifts are  
deep

Against the wall. He knocks, and  
there is time—

(For none doth open),—time to list  
the sweep



And whistle of the wind along the  
mere,  
Through beds of stiffened reeds and  
rushes sear.

"If she be out, I have my pains for  
naught,"

He saith, and knocks again, and yet  
once more,  
But to his ear nor step nor stir is  
brought;

And, after pause, he doth unlatch  
the door  
And enter. No; she is not out, for  
see,  
She sits asleep 'mid frost-work winterly.

Asleep, asleep before her empty grate,  
Asleep, asleep, albeit the landlord  
call.

"What, dame," he saith, and comes  
toward her straight,

"Asleep so early!" But whate'er  
befall,  
She sleepeth; then he nears her, and  
behold  
He lays a hand on hers, and it is cold.

Then doth the Justice to his home re-  
turn;

From that day forth he wears a sad-  
der brow;  
His hands are opened, and his heart  
doth learn

The patience of the poor. He made  
a vow  
And keeps it, for the old and sick have  
shared  
His gifts, their sordid homes he hath  
repaired.

And some he hath made happy, but  
for him

Is happiness no more. He doth re-  
pent,

And now the light of joy is waxen dim,  
Are all his hopes toward the Highest  
sent;

He looks for mercy, and he waits re-  
lease

Above, for this world doth not yield  
him peace.

Night after night, night after desolate  
night,

Day after day, day after tedious  
day,

Stands by his fire, and dulls its gleamy  
light,

Paceth behind or meets him in the  
way;

Or shares the path by hedge-row,  
mere, or stream,

The visitor that doomed him in his  
dream.

---

Thy kingdom come.

I heard a Seer cry: "The wilderness,  
The solitary place,

Shall yet be glad for Him, and He  
shall bless

(Thy kingdom come) with His revealed  
face

The forests; they shall drop their  
precious gum,

And shed for Him their balm: and He  
shall yield

The grandeur of His speech to charm  
the field.

"Then all the soothèd winds shall  
drop to listen,

(Thy kingdom come,)  
Comforted waters waxen calm shall  
glisten

With bashful tremblement beneath His  
smile:

And Echo ever the while  
Shall take, and in her awful joy re-  
peat,

The laughter of His lips — (Thy king-  
dom come):

And hills that sit apart shall be no  
longer dumb;

No, they shall shout and shout,  
Raining their lovely loyalty along the  
dewy plain:

And valleys round about,

"And all the well-contented land,  
made sweet

With flowers she opened at His  
feet,

Shall answer ; shout and make the  
 welkin ring,  
 And tell it to the stars, shout, shout,  
 and sing ;  
 Her cup being full to the brim,  
 Her poverty made rich with Him,  
 Her yearning satisfied to its utmost  
 sum —  
 Lift up thy voice, O Earth, prepare thy  
 song,  
 It shall not yet be long,  
 Lift up, O Earth, for He shall come  
 again,  
 Thy Lord ; and He shall reign, and  
 He SHALL reign —  
 Thy kingdom come."

## SONGS ON THE VOICES OF BIRDS.

### INTRODUCTION.

#### CHILD AND BOATMAN.

"MARTIN, I wonder who makes all  
 the songs."  
 "You do, sir?"  
 "Yes, I wonder how they come."  
 "Well, boy, I wonder what you'll wonder  
 next!"  
 "But somebody must make them?"  
 "Sure enough."  
 "Does your wife know?"  
 "She never said she did."  
 "You told me that she knew so many  
 things."  
 "I said she was a London woman, sir,  
 And a fine scholar, but I never said  
 She knew about the songs."  
 "I wish she did."  
 "And I wish no such thing ; she  
 knows enough,  
 She knows too much already. Look  
 you now,  
 This vessel's off the stocks, a tidy  
 craft."  
 "A schooner, Martin?"  
 "No, boy, no ; a brig,  
 Only she's schooner-rigged, — a lovely  
 craft."

"Is she for me? O, thank you, Mar-  
 tin dear.  
 What shall I call her?"  
 "Well, sir, what you please."  
 "Then write on her 'The Eagle.'"  
 "Bless the child!  
 Eagle! why, you know naught of eagles,  
 you.  
 When we lay off the coast, up Canada  
 way,  
 And chanced to be ashore when twilight  
 fell,  
 That was the place for eagles ; bald  
 they were,  
 With eyes as yellow as gold."  
 "O, Martin, dear,  
 Tell me about them."  
 "Tell! there's naught to tell,  
 Only they snored o' nights and frightened  
 us."  
 "Snored?"  
 "Ay, I tell you, snored ; they  
 slept upright  
 In the great oaks by scores ; as true as  
 time,  
 If I'd had aught upon my mind just  
 then,  
 I would n't have walked that wood for  
 unknown gold ;  
 It was most awful. When the moon  
 was full,  
 I've seen them fish at night, in the  
 middle watch,  
 When she got low. I've seen them  
 plunge like stones,  
 And come up fighting with a fish as  
 long,  
 Ay, longer than my arm ; and they  
 would sail —  
 When they had struck its life out —  
 they would sail  
 Over the deck, and show their fell,  
 fierce eyes,  
 And croon for pleasure, hug the prey,  
 and speed  
 Grand as a frigate on the wind."  
 "My ship,  
 She must be called 'The Eagle' after  
 these.  
 And, Martin, ask your wife about the  
 songs  
 When you go in at dinner-time."  
 "Not I."

# THE NIGHTINGALE HEARD BY THE UNSATISFIED HEART.

When in a May-day hush  
Chanteth the Missel-thrush,  
The harp o' the heart makes answer  
with murmurous stirs;  
When Robin-redbreast sings,  
We think on budding springs,  
And Culvers when they coo are love's  
remembrancers.

But thou in the trance of light  
Stayest the feeding night,  
And Echo makes sweet her lips with  
the utterance wise,  
And casts at our glad feet,  
In a wisp of fancies fleet,  
Life's fair, life's unfulfilled, impassioned  
prophecies.

Her central thought full well  
Thou hast the wit to tell,  
To take the sense o' the dark and to  
yield it so;  
The moral of moonlight  
To set in a cadence bright,  
And sing our loftiest dream that we  
thought none did know.

I have no nest as thou,  
Bird on the blossoming bough,  
Yet over thy tongue outfloweth the  
song o' my soul,  
Chanting, "Forego thy strife,  
The spirit out-acts the life,  
But MUCH is seldom theirs who can  
perceive THE WHOLE.

"Thou drawest a perfect lot  
All thine, but holden not,  
Lie low, at the feet of beauty that ever  
shall bide;  
There might be sorer smart  
Than thine, far-seeing heart,  
Whose fate is still to yearn, and not be  
satisfied."

# SAND MARTINS.

I PASSED an inland-cliff precipitate;  
From tiny caves peeped many a  
sooty poll;  
In each a mother-martin sat elate,  
And of the news delivered her small  
soul.

Fantastic chatter! hasty, glad, and gay,  
Whereof the meaning was not ill to  
tell:  
"Gossip, how wags the world with you  
to-day?"  
"Gossip, the world wags well, the  
world wags well."

And heark'ning, I was sure their little  
ones  
Were in the bird-talk, and discourse  
was made  
Concerning hot sea-bights and tropic  
suns,  
For a clear sultriness the tune con-  
veyed;—

And visions of the sky as of a cup  
Hailing down light on pagan Pha-  
raoh's sand,  
And quivering air-waves trembling up  
and up,  
And blank stone faces marvellously  
bland.

"When should the young be fledged  
and with them hie  
Where costly day drops down in  
crimson light?  
(Fortunate countries of the fire-fly  
Swarm with blue diamonds all the  
sultry night,

"And the immortal moon takes turn  
with them.)  
When should they pass again by  
that red land,  
Where lovely mirage works a brodered  
hem  
To fringe with phantom-palms a  
robe of sand?"

"When should they dip their breasts  
again and play

In slumberous azure pools, clear as  
the air,  
Where rosy-winged flamingoes fish all  
day,  
Stalking amid the lotos-blossom fair?

"Then, over podded tamarinds bear  
their flight,

While cassias blossom in the zone of  
calms,  
And so betake them to a south sea-  
bight,  
To gossip in the crowns of cocoa-  
palms

"Whose roots are in the spray. O,  
haply there

Some dawn, white-winged they might  
chance to find  
A frigate, standing in to make more  
fair  
The loneliness unaltered of mankind.

"A frigate come to water: nuts would  
fall,

And nimble feet would climb the  
flower-flushed strand,  
While northern talk would ring, and  
therewithal  
The martins would desire the cool  
north land.

"And all would be as it had been be-  
fore;

Again, at eve, there would be news  
to tell;

Who passed should hear them chant  
it o'er and o'er,

'Gossip, how wags the world?'  
'Well, gossip, well.'"

---

### A POET IN HIS YOUTH, AND THE CUCKOO-BIRD.

ONCE upon a time, I lay  
Fast asleep at dawn of day;  
Windows open to the south,  
Fancy pouting her sweet mouth  
To my ear.

She turned a globe  
In her slender hand, her robe  
Was all spangled; and she said,  
As she sat at my bed's head,  
"Poet, poet, what! asleep?  
Look! the ray runs up the steep  
To your roof." Then in the golden  
Essence of romances olden,  
Bathed she my entranced heart.  
And she gave a hand to me,  
Drew me onward; "Come!" said she;  
And she moved with me apart,  
Down the lovely vale of Leisure.

Such its name was, I heard say,  
For some Fairies trooped that way;  
Common people of the place,  
Taking their accustomed pleasure  
(All the clocks being stopped), to race  
Down the slope on palfreys fleet.  
Bridle bells made tinkling sweet;  
And they said, "What signified  
Faring home till eventide:  
There were pies on every shelf,  
And the bread would bake itself."  
But for that I cared not, fed,  
As it were, with angels' bread,  
Sweet as honey; yet next day  
All foredoomed to melt away;  
Gone before the sun waxed hot,  
Melted manna that *was not*.

Rock-doves' poetry of plaint,  
Or the starling's courtship quaint;  
Heart made much of, 'twas a boon  
Won from silence, and too soon  
Wasted in the ample air:  
Building rooks far distant were  
Scarce at all would speak the rills,  
And I saw the idle hills,  
In their amber hazes deep,  
Fold themselves and go to sleep,  
Though it was not yet high noon.

Silence? Rather music brought  
From the spheres! As if a thought,  
Having taken wings, did fly  
Through the reaches of the sky.  
Silence? No, a sumptuous sigh  
That had found embodiment,  
That had come across the deep  
After months of wintry sleep,  
And with tender heavings went  
Floating up the firmament.

"O," I mourned, half slumbering  
yet,

"'T is the voice of *my* regret, —  
*Mine!*" and I awoke. Full sweet  
Saffron sunbeams did me greet;  
And the voice it spake again,  
Dropped from yon blue cup of light  
Or some cloudlet swan's-down white  
On my soul, that drank full fain  
The sharp joy — the sweet pain —  
Of its clear, right innocent,  
Unprovoked discontent.  
How it came — where it went —  
Who can tell? The open blue  
Quivered with it, and I, too,  
Trembled. I remembered me  
Of the springs that used to be,  
When a dimpled white-haired child,  
Shy and tender and half wild,  
In the meadows I had heard  
Some way off the talking bird,  
And had felt it marvellous sweet,  
For it laughed: it did me greet,  
Calling me: yet, hid away  
In the woods, it would not play.  
No.

And all the world about,  
While a man will work or sing,  
Or a child pluck flowers of spring,  
Thou wilt scatter music out,  
Rouse him with thy wandering note,  
Changeful fancies set afloat,  
Almost tell with thy clear throat,  
But not quite, the wonder-rife,  
Most sweet riddle, dark and dim,  
That he searcheth all his life,  
Searcheth yet, and ne'er expoundeth;  
And so, winnowing of thy wings,  
Touch and trouble his heart's strings,  
That a certain music soundeth  
In that wondrous instrument,  
With a trembling upward sent,  
That is reckoned sweet above  
By the Greatness surnamed Love.

"O, I hear thee in the blue;  
Would that I might wing it too!  
O to have what hope hath seen!  
O to be what might have been!  
O to set my life, sweet bird,  
To a tune that oft I heard  
When I used to stand alone  
Listening to the lovely moan

Of the swaying pines o'erhead,  
While, a-gathering of bee-bread  
For their living, murmured round,  
As the pollen dropped to ground,  
All the nations from the hives;  
And the little brooding wives  
On each nest, brown dusky things,  
Sat with gold-dust on their wings.  
Then beyond (more sweet than all)  
Talked the tumbling waterfall;  
And there were, and there were not  
(As might fall, and form anew  
Bell-hung drops of honey-dew)  
Echoes of — I know not what;  
As if some right-joyous elf,  
While about his own affairs,  
Whistled softly otherwheres.  
Nay, as if our mother dear,  
Wrapped in sun-warm atmosphere,  
Laughed a little to herself,  
Laughed a little as she rolled,  
Thinking on the days of old.

"Ah! there be some hearts, I wis,  
To which nothing comes amiss.  
Mine was one. Much secret wealth  
I was heir to: and by stealth,  
When the moon was fully grown,  
And she thought herself alone,  
I have heard her, ay, right well,  
Shoot a silver message down  
To the unseen sentinel  
Of a still, snow-thatched town.

"Once, awhile ago, I peered  
In the nest where Spring was reared.  
There she, quivering her fair wings,  
Flattered March with chirrupings;  
And they fed her; nights and days,  
Fed her mouth with much sweet food,  
And her heart with love and praise,  
Till the wild thing rose and flew  
Over woods and water-springs,  
Shaking off the morning dew  
In a rainbow from her wings.

"Once (I will to you confide  
More), — O, once in forest wide,  
I, benighted, overheard  
Marvellous mild echoes stirred,  
And a calling half defined,  
And an answering from afar;  
Somewhat talked with a star,  
And the talk was of mankind.

"'Cuckoo, cuckoo!'  
 Float anear in upper blue:  
 Art thou yet a prophet true?  
 Wilt thou say, 'And having seen  
 Things that be, and have not been,  
 Thou art free o' the world, for naught  
 Can despoil thee of thy thought?'  
 Nay, but make me music yet,  
 Bird, as deep as my regret;  
 For a certain hope hath set,  
 Like a star, and left me heir  
 To a crying for its light,  
 An aspiring infinite,  
 And a beautiful despair!

"Ah! no more, no more, no more  
 I shall lie at thy shut door,  
 Mine ideal, my desired,  
 Dreaming thou wilt open it,  
 And step out, thou most admired,  
 By my side to fare, or sit,  
 Quenching hunger and all drouth  
 With the wit of thy fair mouth,  
 Showing me the wished prize  
 In the calm of thy dove's eyes,  
 Teaching me the wonder-rife  
 Majesties of human life,  
 All its fairest possible sum,  
 And the grace of its to come.

"What a difference! Why of late  
 All sweet music used to say,  
 'She will come, and with thee stay  
 To-morrow, man, if not to-day.'  
 Now it murmurs, 'Wait, wait, wait!'"

#### A RAVEN IN A WHITE CHINE.

I saw, when I looked up, on either  
 hand,  
 A pale high chalk-cliff, reared aloft  
 in white;  
 A narrowing rent soon closed toward  
 the land,—  
 Toward the sea, an open yawning  
 bight.

The polished tide, with scarce a hint of  
 blue,  
 Washed in the bight; above with  
 angry moan

A raven, that was robbed, sat up in  
 view,  
 Croaking and crying on a ledge alone.

"Stand on thy nest, spread out thy  
 fateful wings,  
 With sullen hungry love bemoan thy  
 brood,  
 For boys have wrung their necks, those  
 imp-like things,  
 Whose beaks dripped crimson daily  
 at their food.

"Cry, thou black prophetess! cry, and  
 despair;  
 None love thee, none! Their father  
 was thy foe,  
 Whose father in his youth did know  
 thy lair,  
 And steal thy little demons long ago.

"Thou madest many childless for their  
 sake,  
 And picked out many eyes that loved  
 the light.  
 Cry, thou black prophetess! sit up,  
 awake,  
 Forebode; and ban them through  
 the desolate night."

Lo! while I spake it, with a crimson  
 hue  
 The dipping sun endowed that silver  
 flood,  
 And all the cliffs flushed red, and up  
 she flew,  
 The bird, as mad to bathe in airy  
 blood.

"Nay, thou mayst cry, the omen is  
 not thine,  
 Thou aged priestess of fell doom,  
 and fate.  
 It is not blood: thy gods are making  
 wine,  
 They spilt the must outside their  
 city gate,

"And stained their azure pavement  
 with the lees:  
 They will not listen though thou cry  
 aloud.

Old Chance, thy dame, sits mumbling  
at her ease,  
Nor hears; the fair hag, Luck, is in  
her shroud.

"They heed not, they withdraw the  
sky-hung sign:

Thou hast no charm against the  
favorite race;

Thy gods pour out for it, not blood,  
but wine:

There is no justice in their dwelling-  
place!

"Safe in their father's house the boys  
shall rest,

Though thy fell brood doth stark  
and silent lie;

Their unborn sons may yet despoil thy  
nest:

Cry, thou black prophetess! lift up!  
cry, cry!"

### THE WARBLING OF BLACK- BIRDS.

WHEN I hear the waters fretting,  
When I see the chestnut letting

All her lovely blossom falter down, I  
think, "Alas the day!"

Once, with magical sweet singing,  
Blackbirds set the woodland ringing,  
That awakes no more while April hours  
wear themselves away.

In our hearts fair hope lay smiling,  
Sweet as air, and all beguiling;

And there hung a mist of bluebells on  
the slope and down the dell;

And we talked of joy and splendor  
That the years unborn would render,  
And the blackbirds helped us with the  
story, for they knew it well.

Piping, fluting, "Bees are hum-  
ming,

April's here, and summer's coming;  
Don't forget us when you walk, a man

with men, in pride and joy;

Think on us in alleys shady,  
When you step a graceful lady;

For no fairer day have we to hope for,  
little girl and boy.

"Laugh and play, O lispings waters,  
Lull our downy sons and daughters;  
Come, O wind, and rock their leafy  
cradle in thy wanderings coy;

When they wake, we'll end the  
measure

With a wild sweet cry of pleasure,  
And a 'Hey down derry, let's be merry!  
little girl and boy!'"

### SEA-MEWS IN WINTER TIME.

I WALKED beside a dark gray sea,  
And said, "O world, how cold thou  
art!

Thou poor white world, I pity thee,  
For joy and warmth from thee de-  
part.

"Yon rising wave licks off the snow,  
Winds on the crag each other chase,  
In little powdery whirls they blow  
The misty fragments down its face.

"The sea is cold, and dark its rim,  
Winter sits cowering on the wold,  
And I, beside this watery brim,  
Am also lonely, also cold."

I spoke, and drew toward a rock,  
Where many mews made twittering  
sweet:

Their wings upreared, the clustering  
flock

Did pat the sea-grass with their feet.

A rock but half submerged, the sea  
Ran up and washed it while they  
fed;

Their fond and foolish ecstasy  
A wondering in my fancy bred.

Joy companied with every cry,  
Joy in their food, in that keen wind,  
That heaving sea, that shaded sky,  
And in themselves, and in their  
kind.

The phantoms of the deep at play!  
 What idless graced the twittering  
 things;  
 Luxurious paddlings in the spray,  
 And delicate lifting up of wings.

Then all at once a flight, and fast  
 The lovely crowd flew out to sea;  
 If mine own life had been recast,  
 Earth had not looked more changed  
 to me.

"Where is the cold? Yon clouded  
 skies  
 Have only dropped their curtains low  
 To shade the old mother where she  
 lies,  
 Sleeping a little, 'neath the snow.

"The cold is not in crag, nor scar,  
 Not in the snows that lap the lea,  
 Not in yon wings that beat afar,  
 Delighting, on the crested sea;

"No, nor in yon exultant wind  
 That shakes the oak and bends the  
 pine.  
 Look near, look in, and thou shalt find  
 No sense of cold, fond fool, but  
 thine!"

With that I felt the gloom depart,  
 And thoughts within me did unfold,  
 Whose sunshine warmed me to the  
 heart:  
 I walked in joy, and was not cold.

---

## LAURANCE.

### I.

HE knew she did not love him; but so  
 long  
 As rivals were unknown to him, he  
 dwelt  
 At ease, and did not find his love a  
 pain.

He had much deference in his nature,  
 need  
 To honor,—it became him: he was  
 frank,  
 Fresh, hardy, of a joyous mind, and  
 strong,—  
 Looked all things straight in the face.  
 So when she came  
 Before him first, he looked at her, and  
 looked  
 No more, but colored to his healthful  
 brow,  
 And wished himself a better man, and  
 thought  
 On certain things, and wished they  
 were undone,  
 Because her girlish innocence, the  
 grace  
 Of her unblemished pureness, wrought  
 in him  
 A longing and aspiring, and a shame  
 To think how wicked was the world,—  
 that world  
 Which he must walk in,—while from  
 her (and such  
 As she was) it was hidden; there was  
 made  
 A clean path, and the girl moved on  
 like one  
 In some enchanted ring.

In his young heart

She reigned, with all the beauties that  
 she had,  
 And all the virtues that he rightly  
 took  
 For granted; there he set her with her  
 crown,  
 And at her first enthronement he turned  
 out  
 Much that was best away, for un-  
 aware  
 His thoughts grew noble. She was  
 always there  
 And knew it not, and he grew like to  
 her,  
 And like to what he thought her.

Now he dwelt

With kin that loved him well,—two  
 fine old folk,  
 A rich, right honest yeoman, and his  
 dame,—



Their only grandson he, their pride,  
their heir.

To these one daughter had been born,  
one child,

And as she grew to woman, "Look,"  
they said,

"She must not leave us; let us build a  
wing,

With cheerful rooms and wide, to our  
old grange;

There may she dwell, with her good  
man, and all

God sends them." Then the girl in  
her first youth

Married a curate, — handsome, poor  
in purse,

Of gentle blood and manners, and he  
lived

Under her father's roof as they had  
planned.

Full soon, for happy years are short,  
they filled

The house with children; four were  
born to them.

Then came a sickly season; fever  
spread

Among the poor. The curate, never  
slack

In duty, praying by the sick, or, worse,  
Burying the dead, when all the air was  
clogged

With poisonous mist, was stricken;  
long he lay

Sick, almost to the death, and when his  
head

He lifted from the pillow, there was  
left

One only of that pretty flock: his  
girls,

His three, were cold beneath the sod;  
his boy,

Their eldest born, remained.

The drooping wife  
Bore her great sorrow in such quiet  
wise,

That first they marvelled at her, then  
they tried

To rouse her, showing her their bitter  
grief,

Lamenting, and not sparing; but she  
sighed,

"Let me alone, it will not be for long."

Then did her mother tremble, murmur-  
ing out,

"Dear child, the best of comfort will be  
soon,

O, when you see this other little face,  
You will, please God, be comforted."

She said,  
"I shall not live to see it;" but she  
did, —

A little sickly face, a wan, thin face.

Then she grew eager, and her eyes  
were bright

When she would plead with them,  
"Take me away,

Let me go south; it is the bitter blast  
That chills my tender babe; she can-

not thrive  
Under the desolate, dull, mournful  
cloud."

Then all they journeyed south together,  
mute

With past and coming sorrow, till the  
sun,

In gardens edging the blue tideless  
main,

Warmed them and calmed the aching  
at their hearts,

And all went better for a while; but  
not

For long. They sitting by the orange  
trees

Once rested, and the wife was very  
still: [up

A woman with narcissus flowers heaped  
Let down her basket from her head,

but paused  
With pitying gesture, and drew near  
and stooped,

Taking a white wild face upon her  
breast.

The little babe on its poor mother's  
knees,

None marking it, none knowing else,  
had died.

[hind,  
The fading mother could not stay be-  
Her heart was broken; but it awed

them most  
To feel they must not, dared not, pray  
for life,

Seeing she longed to go, and went so  
gladly.

After, these three, who loved each other well,  
 Brought their one child away, and they were best  
 Together in the wide old grange. Full off  
 The father with the mother talked of her,  
 Their daughter, but the husband never-more;  
 He looked for solace in his work, and gave  
 His mind to teach his boy. And time went on,  
 Until the grandsire prayed those other two,  
 "Now part with him; it must be; for his good:  
 He rules and knows it; choose for him a school,  
 Let him have all the advantages, and all  
 Good training that should make a gentleman."

With that they parted from their boy, and lived  
 Longing between his holidays, and time  
 Sped; he grew on till he had eighteen years.  
 His father loved him, wished to make of him  
 Another parson; but the farmer's wife  
 Murmured at that — "No, no, they learned bad ways,  
 They ran in debt at college; she had heard  
 That many rued the day they sent their boys  
 To college;" and between the two broke in  
 His grandsire, "Find a sober, honest man,  
 A scholar, for our lad should see the world  
 While he is young, that he may marry young.  
 He will not settle and be satisfied  
 Till he has run about the world awhile.  
 Good lack, I longed to travel in my youth,  
 And had no chance to do it. Send him off,

A sober man being found to trust him with, —  
 One with the fear of God before his eyes."  
 And he prevailed; the careful father chose  
 A tutor, young, the worthy matron thought, —  
 In truth, not ten years older than her boy,  
 And glad as he to range, and keen for snows,  
 Desert, and ocean. And they made strange choice  
 Of where to go, left the sweet day behind,  
 And pushed up north in whaling ships, to feel  
 What cold was, see the blowing whale come up,  
 And Arctic creatures, while a scarlet sun  
 Went round and round, crowd on the clear blue berg.

Then did the trappers have them; and they heard  
 Nightly the whistling calls of forest-men  
 That mocked the forest wonners; and they saw  
 Over the open, raging up like doom,  
 The dangerous dust-cloud, that was full of eyes —  
 The bisons. So were three years gone like one;  
 And the old cities drew them for a while,  
 Great mothers, by the Tiber and the Seine;  
 They have hid many sons hard by their seats,  
 But all the air is stirring with them still,  
 The waters murmur of them, skies at eye  
 Are stained with their rich blood, and every sound  
 Means men.

At last, the fourth year running out,  
 The youth came home. And all the cheerful house

Was decked in fresher colors, and the  
 dame  
 Was full of joy. But in the father's  
 heart  
 Abode a painful doubt. "It is not  
 well ;  
 He cannot spend his life with dog and  
 gun.  
 I do not care that my one son should  
 sleep  
 Merely for keeping him in breath, and  
 wake  
 Only to ride to cover."

Not the less  
 The grandsire pondered. "Ay, the  
 boy must work  
 Or spend ; and I must let him spend ;  
 just stay  
 Awhile with us, and then from time to  
 time  
 Have leave to be away with those fine  
 folk  
 With whom, these many years, at  
 school, and now,  
 During his sojourn in the foreign towns,  
 He has been made familiar." Thus a  
 month  
 Went by. They liked the stirring ways  
 of youth,  
 The quick elastic step, and joyous  
 mind,  
 Ever expectant of it knew not what,  
 But something higher than has e'er  
 been born  
 Of easy slumber and sweet competence.  
 And as for him, the while they thought  
 and thought,  
 A comfortable instinct let him know  
 How they had waited for him, to com-  
 plete  
 And give a meaning to their lives ; and  
 still  
 At home, but with a sense of newness  
 there,  
 And frank and fresh as in the school-  
 boy days,  
 He oft — invading of his father's haunts,  
 The study where he passed the silent  
 morn —  
 Would sit, devouring with a greedy  
 joy  
 The piled-up books, uncut as yet ; or  
 wake

To guide with him by night the tube,  
 and search,  
 Ay, think to find new stars ; then, risen  
 betimes,  
 Would ride about the farm, and list  
 the talk  
 Of his hale grandsire.

But a day came round,  
 When, after peering in his mother's  
 room,  
 Shaded and shuttered from the light,  
 he oped  
 A door, and found the rosy grand-  
 mother  
 Ensconced and happy in her special  
 pride,  
 Her store-room. She was corking syr-  
 ups rare,  
 And fruits all sparkling in a crystal  
 coat.  
 Here, after choice of certain cates well  
 known,  
 He, sitting on her bacon-chest at ease,  
 Sang as he watched her, till, right  
 suddenly,  
 As if a new thought came, "Goody,"  
 quoth he,  
 "What, think you, do they want to do  
 with me?  
 What have they planned for me that I  
 should do?"

"Do, laddie!" quoth she, faltering,  
 half in tears ;  
 "Are you not happy with us? not con-  
 tent?  
 Why would ye go away? There is no  
 need  
 That ye should do at all. O, bide at  
 home.  
 Have we not plenty?"

"Even so," he said ;  
 "I did not wish to go."

"Nay, then," quoth she,  
 "Be idle ; let me see your blessed face.  
 What, is the horse your father chose  
 for you  
 Not to your mind? He is? Well,  
 well, remain ;  
 Do as you will, so you but do it here.  
 You shall not want for money."

But, his arms  
Folding, he sat and twisted up his  
mouth  
With comical discomfiture.

"What, then,"  
She sighed, "what is it, child, that you  
would like?"  
"Why," said he, "farming."

And she looked at him,  
Fond, foolish woman that she was, to  
find  
Some fitness in the worker for the  
work,  
And she found none. A certain grace  
there was  
Of movement, and a beauty in the  
face,  
Sun-browned and healthful beauty,  
that had come  
From his grave father; and she  
thought, "Good lack,  
A farmer! he is fitter for a duke.  
He walks — why, how he walks! if I  
should meet  
One like him, whom I knew not, I  
should ask,  
And who may that be?" So the fool-  
ish thought  
Found words. Quoth she, half laugh-  
ing, half ashamed,  
"We planned to make of you — a gen-  
tleman."  
And, with engaging sweet audacity, —  
She thought it nothing less, — he, look-  
ing up,  
With a smile in his blue eyes, replied  
to her,  
"And haven't you done it?" Quoth  
she, lovingly,  
"I think we have, laddie; I think we  
have."  
"Then," quoth he, "I may do what  
best I like;  
It makes no matter. Goody, you were  
wise  
To help me in it, and to let me farm;  
I think of getting into mischief else!"  
"No! do ye, laddie?" quoth the dame,  
and laughed.  
"But ask my grandfather," the youth  
went on,

"To let me have the farm he bought  
last year,  
The little one, to manage. I like land;  
I want some." And she, womanlike,  
gave way,  
Convinced; and promised, and made  
good her word,  
And that same night upon the matter  
spoke,  
In presence of the father and the son.

"Roger," quoth she, "our Laurance  
wants to farm;  
"I think he might do worse." The  
father sat  
Mute, but right glad. The grandson,  
breaking in,  
Set all his wish and his ambition forth;  
But cunningly the old man hid his joy,  
And made conditions with a faint de-  
mur.  
Then, pausing, "Let your father  
speak," quoth he;  
"I am content if he is." At his word  
The parson took him; ay, and, parson  
like,  
Put a religious meaning in the work,  
Man's earliest work, and wished his  
son God speed.

## II.

Thus all were satisfied, and, day by  
day,  
For two sweet years a happy course  
was theirs;  
Happy, but yet the fortunate, the  
young  
Loved, and much cared-for, entered on  
his strife, —  
A stirring of the heart, a quickening  
keen  
Of sight and hearing to the delicate  
Beauty and music of an altered world, —  
Began to walk in that mysterious light  
Which doth reveal and yet transform;  
which gives  
Destiny, sorrow, youth, and death, and  
life,  
Intenser meaning; in disquieting  
Lifts up; a shining light: men call it  
Love.

Fair, modest eyes had she, the girl he  
 loved;  
 A silent creature, thoughtful, grave,  
 sincere.  
 She never turned from him with sweet  
 caprice,  
 Nor changing moved his soul to  
 troublous hope,  
 Nor dropped for him her heavy lashes  
 low,  
 But excellent in youthful grace came  
 up;  
 And, ere his words were ready, passing  
 on,  
 Had left him all a-tremble; yet made  
 sure  
 That by her own true will, and fixed  
 intent,  
 She held him thus remote. Therefore,  
 albeit  
 He knew she did not love him, yet so  
 long  
 As of a rival unaware, he dwelt  
 All in the present, without fear, or hope,  
 Enthralled and whelmed in the deep  
 sea of love,  
 And could not get his head above its  
 wave  
 To search the far horizon, or to mark  
 Whereto it drifted him.

So long, so long;

Then, on a sudden, came the ruthless  
 fate,  
 Showed him a bitter truth, and brought  
 him bale  
 All in the tolling out of noon.

'Twas thus:

Snow-time was come; it had been  
 snowing hard;  
 Across the churchyard path he walked;  
 the clock  
 Began to strike, and, as he passed the  
 porch,  
 Half turning, through a sense that  
 came to him  
 As of some presence in it, he beheld  
 His love, and she had come for shelter  
 there;  
 And all her face was fair with rosy  
 bloom,

The blush of happiness; and one held  
 up  
 Her ungloved hand in both his own,  
 and stooped  
 Toward it, sitting by her. O, her eyes  
 Were full of peace and tender light:  
 they looked  
 One moment in the ungraced lover's  
 face  
 While he was passing in the snow;  
 and he  
 Received the story, while he raised his  
 hat  
 Retiring. Then the clock left off to  
 strike,  
 And that was all. It snowed, and he  
 walked on;  
 And in a certain way he marked the  
 snow,  
 And walked, and came upon the open  
 heath;  
 And in a certain way he marked the  
 cold,  
 And walked as one that had no starting-  
 place  
 Might walk, but not to any certain goal.

And he strode on toward a hollow part,  
 Where from the hillside gravel had  
 been dug,  
 And he was conscious of a cry, and went,  
 Dulled in his sense, as though he  
 heard it not;  
 Till a small farmhouse drudge, a half-  
 grown girl,  
 Rose from the shelter of a drift that  
 lay  
 Against the bushes, crying, "God! O  
 God,  
 O my good God, He sends us help at  
 last."

Then, looking hard upon her, came to  
 him  
 The power to feel and to perceive.  
 Her teeth  
 Chattered, and all her limbs with shud-  
 dering failed,  
 And in her threadbare shawl was  
 wrapped a child  
 That looked on him with wondering,  
 wistful eyes.

"I thought to freeze," the girl broke  
 out with tears;  
 "Kind sir, kind sir," and she held out  
 the child,  
 As praying him to take it; and he did;  
 And gave to her the shawl, and swathed  
 his charge  
 In the foldings of his plaid; and when  
 it thrust  
 Its small round face against his breast,  
 and felt  
 With small red hands for warmth, un-  
 bearable  
 Pains of great pity rent his straitened  
 heart,  
 For the poor upland dwellers had been  
 out  
 Since morning dawn, at early milking-  
 time,  
 Wandering and stumbling in the drift.  
 And now,  
 Lamed with a fall, half crippled by the  
 cold,  
 Hardly prevailed his arm to drag her  
 on,  
 That ill-clad child, who yet the younger  
 child  
 Had motherly cared to shield. So  
 toiling through  
 The great white storm coming, and  
 coming yet,  
 And coming till the world confounded  
 sat  
 With all her fair familiar features  
 gone,  
 The mountains muffled in an eddying  
 swirl,  
 He led or bore them, and the little one  
 Peered from her shelter, pleased; but  
 oft would mourn  
 The elder, "They will beat me: O my  
 can,  
 I left my can of milk upon the moor."  
 And he compared her trouble with his  
 own,  
 And had no heart to speak. And yet  
 'twas keen;  
 It filled her to the putting down of  
 pain  
 And hunger,—what could his do  
 more?  
 He brought  
 The children to their home, and sud-  
 denly

Regained himself, and, wondering at  
 himself,  
 That he had borne, and yet been dumb  
 so long,  
 The weary wailing of the girl, he paid  
 Money to buy her pardon; heard them  
 say,  
 "Peace, we have feared for you; for-  
 get the milk,  
 It is no matter!" and went forth again  
 And waded in the snow, and quietly  
 Considered in his patience what to do  
 With all the dull remainder of his days.

With dusk he was at home, and felt it  
 good  
 To hear his kindred talking, for it  
 broke  
 A mocking endless echo in his soul,  
 "It is no matter!" and he could not  
 choose  
 But mutter, though the weariness o'er-  
 came  
 His spirit, "Peace, it is no matter;  
 peace,  
 It is no matter!" For he felt that all  
 Was as it had been, and his father's  
 heart  
 Was easy, knowing not how that same  
 day  
 Hope with her tender colors and de-  
 light  
 (He should not care to have him know)  
 were dead;  
 Yea, to all these, his nearest and most  
 dear,  
 It was no matter. And he heard them  
 talk  
 Of timber felled, of certain fruitful  
 fields,  
 And profitable markets.

All for him  
 Their plans, and yet the echoes  
 swarmed and swam  
 About his head, whenever there was  
 pause;  
 "It is no matter!" And his greater  
 self  
 Arose in him and fought. "It matters  
 much,  
 It matters all to these, that not to-day  
 Nor ever they should know it. I will  
 hide

The wound ; ay, hide it with a sleepless  
care.

What! shall I make these three to  
drink of rue,

Because my cup is bitter?" And he  
thrust

Himself in thought away, and made  
his ears

Hearken, and caused his voice, that  
yet did seem

Another, to make answer, when they  
spoke,

As there had been no snow-storm, and  
no porch,

And no despair.

So this went on awhile  
Until the snow had melted from the  
world,

And he, one noonday, wandering up a  
lane,

Met on a turn the woman whom he  
loved.

Then, even to trembling he was moved ;  
his speech

Faltered ; but, when the common  
kindly words

Of greeting were all said, and she  
passed on,

He could not bear her sweetness and  
his pain.

"Muriel!" he cried ; and when she  
heard her name,

She turned. "You know I love you,"  
he broke out.

She answered, "Yes," and sighed.

"O, pardon me,  
Pardon me," quoth the lover ; "let  
me rest

In certainty, and hear it from your  
mouth :

Is he with whom I saw you once of  
late

To call you wife?" "I hope so," she  
replied ;

And over all her face the rose-bloom  
came,

As, thinking on that other, unaware  
Her eyes waxed tender. When he

looked on her,  
Standing to answer him, with lovely  
shame,

Submiss, and yet not his, a passionate,

A quickened sense of his great impo-  
tence

To drive away the doom got hold on  
him ;

He set his teeth to force the unbear-  
able

Misery back ; his wide-awakened eyes  
Flashed as with flame.

And she, all overawed  
And mastered by his manhood, waited  
yet,

And trembled at the deep she could  
not sound, —

A passionate nature in a storm, — a  
heart

Wild with a mortal pain, and in the grasp  
Of an immortal love.

"Farewell," he said,  
Recovering words ; and, when she gave  
her hand,

"My thanks for your good candor ; for  
I feel

That it has cost you something."  
Then, the blush

Yet on her face, she said : "It was  
your due :

But keep this matter from your friends  
and kin,

We would not have it known." Then,  
cold and proud,

Because there leaped from under his  
straight lids,

And instantly was veiled, a keen sur-  
prise, —

"He wills it, and I therefore think it  
well."

Thereon they parted ; but from that  
time forth,

Whether they met on festal eve, in field,  
Or at the church, she ever bore her-  
self

Proudly, for she had felt a certain pain ;  
The disapproval hastily betrayed

And quickly hidden hurt her. "'Twas  
a grace,"

She thought, "to tell this man the  
thing he asked,

And he rewards me with surprise. I  
like

No one's surprise, and least of all be-  
stowed

Where he bestowed it."

But the spring came on.  
 Looking to wed in April, all her thoughts  
 Grew loving; she would fain the world  
     had waxed  
 More happy with her happiness, and  
     off  
 Walking among the flowery woods she  
     felt  
 Their loveliness reach down into her  
     heart,  
 And knew with them the ecstasies of  
     growth,  
 The rapture that was satisfied with  
     light,  
 The pleasure of the leaf in exquisite  
 Expansion, through the lovely, longed-  
     for spring.

And as for him — (Some narrow hearts  
     there are  
 That suffer blight when that they fed  
     upon,  
 As something to complete their being,  
     fails,  
 And they retire into their holds and  
     pine,  
 And long restrained grow stern. But  
     some there are  
 That in a sacred want and hunger rise,  
 And draw the misery home and live  
     with it,  
 And excellent in honor wait, and will  
 That somewhat good should yet be  
     found in it,  
 Else wherefore were they born?) —  
     and as for him,  
 He loved her, but his peace and welfare  
     made  
 The sunshine of three lives. The  
     cheerful grange  
 Threw open wide its hospitable doors  
 And drew in guests for him. The gar-  
     den flowers,  
 Sweet budding wonders, all were set  
     for him.  
 In him the eyes at home were satisfied,  
 And if he did but laugh the ear ap-  
     proved.

What then? He dwelt among them as  
     of old,  
 And taught his mouth to smile.

And time went on,  
 Till on a morning, when the perfect  
     Spring  
 Rested among her leaves, he, journey-  
     ing home  
 After short sojourn in a neighboring  
     town,  
 Stopped at the little station on the  
     line  
 That ran between his woods; a lonely  
     place  
 And quiet, and a woman and a child  
 Got out. He noted them, but, walk-  
     ing on  
 Quickly, went back into the wood, im-  
     pelled  
 By hope, for, passing, he had seen his  
     love,  
 And she was sitting on a rustic seat  
 That overlooked the line, and he de-  
     sired,  
 With longing indescribable, to look  
 Upon her face again. And he drew  
     near.  
 She was right happy; she was waiting  
     there.  
 He felt that she was waiting for her  
     lord.  
 She cared no whit if Laurance went or  
     stayed,  
 But answered when he spoke, and  
     dropped her cheek  
 In her fair hand.

And he, not able yet  
 To force himself away, and never-  
     more  
 Behold her, gathered blossom, prim-  
     rose flowers,  
 And wild anemone, for many a clump  
 Grew all about him, and the hazel-  
     rods  
 Were nodding with their catkins. But  
     he heard  
 The stopping train, and felt that he  
     must go;  
 His time was come. There was naught  
     else to do  
 Or hope for. With the blossom he  
     drew near,  
 And would have had her take it from  
     his hand;  
 But she, half lost in thought, held out  
     her own,



And then, remembering him and his long love,  
 She said, "I thank you; pray you now forget,  
 Forget me, Laurance," and her lovely eyes  
 Softened; but he was dumb, till through the trees  
 Suddenly broke upon their quietude The woman and her child. And Muriel said,  
 "What will you?" She made answer quick and keen,  
 "Your name, my lady; 'tis your name I want,  
 Tell me your name." Not startled, not displeased,  
 But with a musing sweetness on her mouth,  
 As if considering in how short a while It would be changed, she lifted up her face  
 And gave it, and the little child drew near  
 And pulled her gown, and prayed her for the flowers.  
 Then Laurance, not content to leave them so,  
 Nor yet to wait the coming lover, spoke:  
 "Your errand with this lady?"—"And your right  
 To ask it?" she broke out with sudden heat  
 And passion: "What is that to you? Poor child!  
 Madam!" And Muriel lifted up her face  
 And looked,—they looked into each other's eyes.

"That man who comes," the clear-voiced woman cried,—  
 "That man with whom you think to wed so soon,—  
 You must not heed him. What! the world is full  
 Of men, and some are good, and most, God knows,  
 Better than he,—that I should say it! —far  
 Better." And down her face the large tears ran,

And Muriel's wild dilated eyes looked up,  
 Taking a terrible meaning from her words;  
 And Laurance stared about him, half in doubt  
 If this were real, for all things were so blithe,  
 And soft air tossed the little flowers about;  
 The child was singing, and the black-birds piped,  
 Glad in fair sunshine. And the women both  
 Were quiet, gazing in each other's eyes.

He found his voice, and spoke:  
 "This is not well,  
 Though whom you speak of should have done you wrong;  
 A man that could desert and plan to wed  
 Will not his purpose yield to God and right,  
 Only to law. You, whom I pity so much,  
 If you be come this day to urge a claim,  
 You will not tell me that your claim will hold;  
 'Tis only, if I read aright, the old,  
 Sorrowful, hateful story!"

Muriel sighed,  
 With a dull patience that he marvelled at:  
 "Be plain with me. I know not what to think,  
 Unless you are his wife. Are you his wife?  
 Be plain with me." And all too quietly,  
 With running down of tears, the answer came,  
 "Ay, madam, ay! the worse for him and me."  
 Then Muriel heard her lover's foot anear.  
 And cried upon him with a bitter cry,  
 Sharp and despairing. And those two stood back,  
 With such affright and violent anger stirred,  
 He broke from out the thicket to her [side,

Not knowing. But, her hands before  
 her face,  
 She sat; and, stepping close, that  
 woman came  
 And faced him. Then said Muriel,  
 "O my heart,  
 Herbert!" — and he was dumb, and  
 ground his teeth,  
 And lifted up his hand and looked at it,  
 And at the woman; but a man was  
 there  
 Who whirled her from her place, and  
 thrust himself  
 Between them; he was strong, — a  
 stalwart man:  
 And Herbert, thinking on it, knew his  
 name.  
 "What good," quoth he, "though you  
 and I should strive  
 And wrestle all this April day? A  
 word,  
 And not a blow, is what these women  
 want:  
 Master yourself, and say it." But he,  
 weak  
 With passion and great anguish, flung  
 himself  
 Upon the seat and cried, "O lost, my  
 love!  
 O Muriel, Muriel!" And the woman  
 spoke,  
 "Sir, 'twas an evil day you wed with  
 me;  
 And you were young; I know it, sir,  
 right well.  
 Sir, I have worked; I have not troubled  
 you,  
 Not for myself, nor for your child. I  
 know  
 We are not equal." "Hold!" he  
 cried; "have done;  
 Your still, tame words are worse than  
 hate or scorn.  
 Get from me! Ay, my wife, my wife,  
 indeed!  
 All's done. You hear it, Muriel; if  
 you can,  
 O sweet, forgive me."

Then the woman moved  
 Slowly away; her little singing child  
 Went in her wake; and Muriel  
 dropped her hands,

And sat before these two that loved her  
 so,  
 Mute and unheeding. There were  
 angry words,  
 She knew, but yet she could not hear  
 the words;  
 And afterwards the man she loved  
 stooped down  
 And kissed her forehead once, and  
 then withdrew  
 To look at her, and with a gesture  
 pray  
 Her pardon. And she tried to speak,  
 but failed,  
 And presently, and soon, O, — he was  
 gone.

She heard him go, and Laurance, still  
 as stone,  
 Remained beside her; and she put her  
 hand  
 Before her face again, and afterward  
 She heard a voice, as if, a long way  
 off,  
 Some one entreated, but she could not  
 heed.  
 Thereon he drew her hand away, and  
 raised  
 Her passive from her seat. So then  
 she knew  
 That he would have her go with him,  
 go home, —  
 It was not far to go, — a dreary home.  
 A crippled aunt, of birth and lineage  
 high,  
 Had, in her youth, and for a place  
 and home, [girl  
 Married the stern old rector; and the  
 Dwelt with them: she was orphaned,  
 — had no kin  
 Nearer than they. And Laurance  
 brought her in,  
 And spared to her the telling of this  
 woe.  
 He sought her kindred where they sat  
 apart,  
 And laid before them all the cruel  
 thing,  
 As he had seen it. After, he retired;  
 And restless, and not master of him-  
 self,  
 He day and night haunted the rectory  
 lanes;

And all things, even to the spreading  
 out  
 Of leaves, their flickering shadows on  
 the ground,  
 Or sailing of the slow, white cloud, or  
 peace  
 And glory and great light on mountain  
 heads, —  
 All things were leagued against him,  
 ministered  
 By likeness or by contrast to his love.

But what was that to Muriel, though her  
 peace  
 He would have purchased for her with  
 all prayers,  
 And costly, passionate, despairing  
 tears?  
 O, what to her that he should find it  
 worse  
 To bear her life's undoing than his  
 own?

She let him see her, and she made no  
 moan,  
 But talked full calmly of indifferent  
 things,  
 Which when he heard, and marked the  
 faded eyes  
 And lovely wasted cheek, he started up  
 With "This I cannot bear!" and  
 shamed to feel  
 His manhood giving way, and utterly  
 Subdued by her sweet patience and his  
 pain,  
 Made haste and from the window  
 sprang, and paced,  
 Battling and chiding with himself, the  
 maze.

She suffered, and he could not make  
 her well  
 For all his loving; — he was naught to  
 her.  
 And now his passionate nature, set  
 astir,  
 Fought with the pain that could not be  
 endured;  
 And like a wild thing, suddenly aware  
 That it is caged, which flings and  
 bruises all  
 Its body at the bars, he rose, and  
 raged

Against the misery: then he made all  
 worse  
 With tears. But when he came to her  
 again,  
 Willing to talk as they had talked be-  
 fore,  
 She sighed, and said, with that strange  
 quietness,  
 "I know you have been crying:" and  
 she bent  
 Her own fair head and wept.

She felt the cold —  
 The freezing cold that deadened all her  
 life —  
 Give way a little; for this passionate  
 Sorrow, and all for her, relieved her  
 heart,  
 And brought some natural warmth,  
 some natural tears.

## III.

And after that, though oft he sought  
 her door,  
 He might not see her. First they said  
 to him,  
 "She is not well;" and afterwards,  
 "Her wish  
 Is ever to be quiet." Then in haste  
 They took her from the place, because  
 so fast  
 She faded. As for him, — though  
 youth and strength  
 Can bear the weight as of a world, at  
 last  
 The burden of it tells, — he heard it  
 said,  
 When autumn came, "The poor sweet  
 thing will die:  
 That shock was mortal." And he  
 cared no more  
 To hide, if yet he could have hidden,  
 the blight  
 That was laying waste his heart. He  
 journeyed south  
 To Devon, where she dwelt with other  
 kin,  
 Good, kindly women; and he wrote to  
 them,  
 Praying that he might see her ere she  
 died.

So in her patience she permitted him  
 To be about her, for it eased his heart;  
 And as for her that was to die so soon,  
 What did it signify? She let him weep  
 Some passionate tears beside her couch,  
     she spoke  
 Pitying words, and then they made him  
     go.  
 It was enough, they said; her time was  
     short,  
 And he had seen her. He HAD seen,  
     and felt  
 The bitterness of death; but he went  
     home,  
 Being satisfied in that great longing  
     now,  
 And able to endure what might befall.

And Muriel lay, and faded with the  
     year;  
 She lay at the door of death, that  
     opened not  
 To take her in; for when the days  
     once more  
 Began a little to increase, she felt, —  
 And it was sweet to her, she was so  
     young, —  
 She felt a longing for the time of flow-  
     ers,  
 And dreamed that she was walking in  
     that wood  
 With her two feet among the prim-  
     roses.

Then when the violet opened, she rose  
     up  
 And walked. The tender leaf and ten-  
     der light  
 Did solace her; but she was white and  
     wan,  
 The shadow of that Muriel in the wood  
 Who listened to those deadly words.

And now  
 Empurpled seas began to blush and  
     bloom,  
 Doves made sweet moaning, and the  
     guelder-rose  
 In a great stillness dropped, and ever  
     dropped,  
 Her wealth about her feet, and there it  
     lay,  
 And drifted not at all. The lilac spread

Odorous essence round her; and full  
     oft,  
 When Muriel felt the warmth her  
     pulses cheer,  
 She, faded, sat among the May-tide  
     bloom,  
 And with a reverent quiet in her soul,  
 Took back — it was His will — her  
     time, and sat  
 Learning again to live.

Thus as she sat  
 Upon a day, she was aware of one  
 Who at a distance marked her. This  
     again  
 Another day, and she was vexed, for  
     yet  
 She longed for quiet; but she heard a  
     foot  
 Pass once again, and beckoned through  
     the trees.  
 "Laurance!" And all impatient of  
     unrest  
 And strife, ay, even of the sight of  
     them,  
 When he drew near, with tired, tired  
     lips,  
 As if her soul upbraided him, she said,  
 "Why have you done this thing?"  
     He answered her,  
 "I am not always master in the fight:  
 I could not help it."

"What!" she sighed, "not yet!  
 O, I am sorry;" and she talked to him  
 As one who looked to live, imploring  
     him, —  
 "Try to forget me. Let your fancy  
     dwell  
 Elsewhere, nor me enrich with it so  
     long;  
 It wearies me to think of this your love.  
 Forget me!"

He made answer, "I will try:  
 The task will take me all my life to  
     learn,  
 Or, were it learned, I know not how to  
     live;  
 This pain is part of life and being  
     now, —  
 It is myself; but yet — but I will try."  
 Then she spoke friendly to him, — of  
     his home,

His father, and the old, brave, loving folk;  
 She bade him think of them. And not her words,  
 But having seen her, satisfied his heart.  
 He left her, and went home to live his life,  
 And all the summer heard it said of her,  
 "Yet, she grows stronger;" but when autumn came  
 Again she drooped.

A bitter thing it is  
 To lose at once the lover and the love;  
 For who receiveth not may yet keep life  
 In the spirit with bestowal. But for her,  
 This Muriel, all was gone. The man she loved,  
 Not only from her present had withdrawn,  
 But from her past, and there was no such man,  
 There never had been.

He was not as one  
 Who takes love in, like some sweet bird, and holds  
 The winged fluttering stranger to his breast,  
 Till, after transient stay, all unaware  
 It leaves him: it has flown. No; this may live  
 In memory,—loved till death. He was not vile;  
 For who by choice would part with that pure bird,  
 And lose the exultation of its song?  
 He had not strength of will to keep it fast,  
 Nor warmth of heart to keep it warm, nor life  
 Of thought to make the echo sound for him  
 After the song was done. Pity that man:  
 His music is all flown, and he forgets  
 The sweetness of it, till at last he thinks  
 'Twas no great matter. But he was not vile,

Only a thing to pity most in man,  
 Weak,—only poor, and, if he knew it, undone.  
 But Herbert! When she mused on it, her soul  
 Would fain have hidden him for ever—more,  
 Even from herself,—so pure of speech, so frank,  
 So full of household kindness. Ah, so good  
 And true! A little, she had sometimes thought,  
 Despondent for himself, but strong of faith  
 In God, and faith in her, this man had seemed.

Ay, he was gone! and she whom he had wed,  
 As Muriel learned, was sick, was poor, was sad.  
 And Muriel wrote to comfort her, and send,  
 From her small store, money to help her need,  
 With, "Pray you keep it secret."  
 Then the whole  
 Of the cruel tale was told.

What more? She died.  
 Her kin, profuse of thanks, not bitterly,  
 Wrote of the end. "Our sister fain had seen  
 Her husband; prayed him sore to come. But no.  
 And then she prayed him that he would forgive,  
 Madam, her breaking of the truth to you.  
 Dear madam, he was angry, yet we think  
 He might have let her see, before she died,  
 The words she wanted, but he did not write  
 Till she was gone,—'I neither can forgive,  
 Nor would I if I could.'"

"Patience, my heart!  
 And this, then, is the man I loved!"

But yet  
 He sought a lower level, for he wrote,  
 Telling the story with a different hue, —  
 Telling of freedom. He desired to  
     come,  
 "For now," said he, "O love, may all  
     be well."  
 And she rose up against it in her soul,  
 For she despised him. And with pas-  
     sionate tears  
 Of shame, she wrote, and only wrote  
     these words, —  
 "Herbert, I will not see you."

Then she drooped  
 Again; it is so bitter to despise;  
 And all her strength, when autumn  
     leaves down dropped,  
 Fell from her. "Ah!" she thought,  
     "I rose up once,  
 I cannot rise up now; here is the  
     end."  
 And all her kinsfolk thought, "It is  
     the end."

But when that other heard, "It is the  
     end,"  
 His heart was sick, and he, as by a  
     power  
 Far stronger than himself, was driven  
     to her.  
 Reason rebelled against it, but his will  
 Required it of him with a craving  
     strong  
 As life, and passionate though hope-  
     less pain.

She, when she saw his face, considered  
     him  
 Full quietly, let all excuses pass  
 Not answered, and considered yet  
     again.

"He had heard that she was sick;  
     what could he do  
 But come, and ask her pardon that he  
     came?"  
 What could he do, indeed?—a weak  
     white girl  
 Held all his heartstrings in her small  
     white hand;  
 His youth, and power, and majesty  
     were hers,  
 And not his own.

She looked, and pitied him,  
 Then spoke: "He loves me with a love  
     that lasts.  
 Ah me! that I might get away from it,  
 Or, better, hear it said that love is NOT,  
 And then I could have rest. My time  
     is short,  
 I think,—so short." And roused  
     against himself  
 In stormy wrath, that it should be his  
     doom  
 Her to disquiet whom he loved, — ay,  
     her  
 For whom he would have given all his  
     rest,  
 If there were any left to give, — he  
     took  
 Her words up bravely, promising once  
     more  
 Absence, and praying pardon; but  
     some tears  
 Dropped quietly upon her cheek.

"Remain,"  
 She said, "for there is something to be  
     told,  
 Some words that you must hear.

"And first, hear this:  
 God has been good to me; you must  
     not think  
 That I despair. There is a quiet time  
 Like evening in my soul. I have no  
     heart,  
 For cruel Herbert killed it long ago,  
 And death strides on. Sit, then, and  
     give your mind  
 To listen, and your eyes to look at me.  
 Look at my face, Laurance, how white  
     it is;  
 Look at my hand, — my beauty is all  
     gone."  
 And Laurance lifted up his eyes; he  
     looked,  
 But answered, from their deeps that  
     held no doubt,  
 Far otherwise than she had willed:  
     they said,  
 "Lovelier than ever."

Yet her words went on,  
 Cold, and so quiet, "I have suffered  
     much,

And I would fain that none who care  
 for me  
 Should suffer a like pang that I can  
 spare.  
 Therefore," said she, and not at all  
 could blush,  
 "I have brought my mind of late to  
 think of this:  
 That since your life is spoilt (not will-  
 ingly,  
 My God, not willingly by me), 'twere  
 well  
 To give you choice of griefs.

"Were it not best  
 To weep for a dead love, and after-  
 wards  
 Be comforted the sooner, that she died  
 Remote, and left not in your house and  
 life  
 Aught to remind you? That indeed  
 were best.  
 But were it best to weep for a dead  
 wife,  
 And let the sorrow spend and satisfy  
 Itself with all expression, and so end?  
 I think not so; but if for you 'tis best,  
 Then, — do not answer with too sudden  
 words:  
 It matters much to you; not much, not  
 much  
 To me, — then truly I will die your  
 wife;  
 I will marry you."

What was he like to say,  
 But, overcome with love and tears, to  
 choose  
 The keener sorrow, — take it to his  
 heart,  
 Cherish it, make it part of him, and  
 watch  
 Those eyes, that were his light, till  
 they should close?

He answered her with eager, faltering  
 words,  
 "I choose, — my heart is yours, — die  
 in my arms."

But was it well? Truly, at first, for  
 him  
 It was not well: he saw her fade, and  
 cried,

"When may this be?" She answered,  
 "When you will,"  
 And cared not much, for very faint she  
 grew,  
 Tired and cold. Oft in her soul she  
 thought,  
 "If I could slip away before the ring  
 Is on my hand, it were a blessed lot  
 For both, — a blessed thing for him,  
 and me."

But it was not so; for the day had  
 come, —  
 Was over: days and months had come,  
 and Death, —  
 Within whose shadow she had lain,  
 which made  
 Earth and its loves, and even its bitter-  
 ness,  
 Indifferent, — Death withdrew himself,  
 and life  
 Woke up, and found that it was fo'lded  
 fast,  
 Drawn to another life forevermore.  
 O, what a waking! After it there came  
 Great silence. She got up once more,  
 in spring,  
 And walked, but not alone, among the  
 flowers.  
 She thought within herself, "What  
 have I done?  
 How shall I do the rest?" And he,  
 who felt  
 Her inmost thought, was silent even as  
 she.  
 "What have we done?" she thought.  
 But as for him,  
 When she began to look him in the  
 face,  
 Considering, "Thus and thus his feat-  
 ures are,"  
 For she had never thought on them be-  
 fore,  
 She read their grave repose aright.  
 She knew  
 That in the stronghold of his heart,  
 held back,  
 Hidden reserves of measureless con-  
 tent  
 Kept house with happy thought, for  
 her sake mute.  
 Most patient Muriel! when he brought  
 her home,

She took the place they gave her, —  
strove to please

His kin, and did not fail; but yet  
thought on,

“What have I done? how shall I do  
the rest?

Ah! so contented, Laurance, with this  
wife

That loves you not, for all the stateli-  
ness

And grandeur of your manhood, and  
the deeps

In your blue eyes.” And after that  
awhile

She rested from such thinking, put it by  
And waited. She had thought on

death before:

But no, this Muriel was not yet to  
die;

And when she saw her little tender  
babe,

She felt how much the happy days of  
life

Outweigh the sorrowful. A tiny thing,  
Whom when it slept the lovely mother

nursed

With reverent love, whom when it  
woke she fed

And wondered at, and lost herself in  
long

Rapture of watching, and contentment  
deep.

Once while she sat, this babe upon her  
knee,

Her husband and his father standing  
nigh,

About to ride, the grandmother, all  
pride

And consequence, so deep in learned  
talk

• Of infants, and their little ways and  
wiles,

Broke off to say, “I never saw a babe  
So like its father.” And the thought

was new  
To Muriel; she looked up, and when

she looked,  
Her husband smiled. And she, the

lovely bloom  
Flushing her face, would fain he had

not known,  
Nor noticed her surprise. But he did

know;

Yet there was pleasure in his smile  
and love

Tender and strong. He kissed her;  
kissed his babe,

With “Goody, you are left in charge,  
take care.”

“As if I needed telling,” quoth the  
dame;

And they were gone.

Then Muriel, lost in thought,  
Gazed; and the grandmother, with

open pride,  
Tended the lovely pair; till Muriel

said,  
“Is she so like? Dear granny, get me

now  
The picture that his father has;” and

soon  
The old woman put it in her hand.

The wife,  
Considering it with deep and strange

delight,  
Forgot for once her babe, and looked

and learned.

A mouth for mastery and manful work,  
A certain brooding sweetness in the

eyes,  
A brow, the harbor of grave thought,

and hair  
Saxon of hue. She conned; then

blushed again,  
Remembering now, when she had

looked on him,  
The sudden radiance of her husband's

smile.

But Muriel did not send the picture  
back;

She kept it; while her beauty and her  
babe

Flourished together, and in health and  
peace

She lived.

Her husband never said to her,  
“Love, are you happy?” never said to

her,  
“Sweet, do you love me?” and at first,

whene'er  
They rode together in the lanes, and

paused,



Stopping their horses, when the day  
 was hot,  
 In the shadow of a tree, to watch the  
 clouds,  
 Ruffled in drifting on the jagged rocks  
 That topped the mountains, — when  
 she sat by him,  
 Withdrawn at even while the summer  
 stars  
 Came starting out of nothing, as new  
 made,  
 She felt a little trouble, and a wish  
 That he would yet keep silence, and  
 he did.  
 That one reserve he would not touch,  
 but still  
 Respected.

Muriel grew more brave in time,  
 And talked at ease, and felt disquietude  
 Fade. And another child was given to  
 her.

"Now we shall do," the old great-  
 grandsire cried,  
 "For this is the right sort, a boy."  
 "Fie, fie,"  
 Quoth the good dame; "but never  
 heed you, love,  
 He thinks them both as right as right  
 can be."

But Laurance went from home, ere yet  
 the boy  
 Was three weeks old. It fretted him  
 to go,  
 But yet he said, "I must:" and she  
 was left  
 Much with the kindly dame, whose  
 gentle care  
 Was like a mother's; and the two  
 could talk  
 Sweetly, for all the difference in their  
 years.

But unaware, the wife betrayed a wish  
 That she had known why Laurance  
 left her thus.

"Ay, love," the dame made answer;  
 "for he said,  
 'Goody,' before he left, 'if Muriel ask  
 No question, tell her naught; but if  
 she let

Any disquietude appear to you,  
 Say what you know.'" "What?"  
 Muriel said, and laughed,  
 "I ask, then."

"Child, it is that your old love,  
 Some two months past, was here. Nay,  
 never start:  
 He's gone. He came, our Laurance  
 met him near;  
 He said that he was going over seas,  
 'And might I see your wife this only  
 once,  
 And get her pardon?'"

"Mercy!" Muriel cried,  
 "But Laurance does not wish it?"

"Nay, now, nay,"  
 Quoth the good dame.

"I cannot," Muriel cried;  
 "He does not, surely, think I should."

"Not he,"  
 The kind old woman said, right sooth-  
 ingly.  
 "Does not he ever know, love, ever do  
 What you like best?"

And Muriel, trembling yet,  
 Agreed. "I heard him say," the  
 dame went on,  
 "For I was with him when they met  
 that day,  
 'It would not be agreeable to my wife.'"

Then Muriel, pondering, — "And he  
 said no more?  
 You think he did not add, 'nor to my-  
 self'?"

And with her soft, calm, inward voice,  
 the dame  
 Unruffled answered, "No, sweet heart,  
 not he:

What need he care?" "And why not?"  
 Muriel cried,

Longing to hear the answer. "O, he  
 knows,  
 He knows, love, very well:" — with  
 that she smiled.

"Bless your fair face, you have not  
 really thought  
 He did not know you loved him?"

Muriel said,  
 "He never told me, goody, that he  
 knew."  
 "Well," quoth the dame, "but it may  
 chance, my dear,  
 That he thinks best to let old troubles  
 sleep:  
 Why need to rouse them? You are  
 happy, sure?  
 But if one asks, 'Art happy?' why, it  
 sets  
 The thoughts a-working. No, say I,  
 let love,  
 Let peace and happy folk alone.

"He said,  
 'It would not be agreeable to my wife.'  
 And he went on to add, in course of  
 time  
 That he would ask you, when it suited  
 you,  
 To write a few kind words."

"Yes," Muriel said,  
 "I can do that."

"So Laurance went, you see,"  
 The soft voice added, "to take down  
 that child.  
 Laurance had written oft about the  
 child,  
 And now, at last, the father made it  
 known  
 He could not take him. He has lost,  
 they say.  
 His money, with much gambling; now  
 he wants  
 To lead a good, true, working life. He  
 wrote,  
 And let this so be seen, that Laurance  
 went  
 And took the child, and took the money  
 down  
 To pay."

And Muriel found her talking sweet,  
 And asked once more, the rather that  
 she longed  
 To speak again of Laurance, "And you  
 think  
 He knows I love him?"

"Ay, good sooth, he knows  
 No fear; but he is like his father, love.

His father never asked my pretty child  
 One prying question; took her as she  
 was;  
 Trusted her; she has told me so: he  
 knew  
 A woman's nature. Laurance is the  
 same.  
 He knows you love him; but he will  
 not speak;  
 No, never. Some men are such gen-  
 tlemen!"

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## SONGS OF THE NIGHT WATCHES,

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SONG OF  
 EVENING, AND A CONCLUDING  
 SONG OF THE EARLY DAY.

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### INTRODUCTORY.

*(Old English Manner.)*

#### APPRENTICED.

"COME out and hear the waters shoot,  
 the owlet hoot, the owlet hoot;  
 Yon crescent moon, a golden boat,  
 hangs dim behind the tree, O!  
 The dropping thorn makes white the  
 grass, O sweetest lass, and sweet-  
 est lass;  
 Come out and smell the ricks of hay  
 adown the croft with me, O!"

"My granny nods before her wheel,  
 and drops her reel, and drops  
 her reel;  
 My father with his crony talks as gay  
 as gay can be, O!  
 But all the milk is yet to skim, ere  
 light wax dim, ere light wax dim;  
 How can I step adown the croft, my  
 'prentice lad, with thee, O?"

"And must ye bide, yet waiting's long,  
 and love is strong, and love is  
 strong;  
 And O! had I but served the time,  
 that takes so long to flee, O!

And thou, my lass, by morning's light  
wast all in white, wast all in  
white,  
And parson stood within the rails,  
a-marrying me and thee, O."

THE FIRST WATCH.

TIRED.

I.

O, I WOULD tell you more, but I am  
tired ;  
For I have longed, and I have had  
my will ;  
I pleaded in my spirit, I desired :  
"Ah! let me only see him, and be  
still  
All my days after."

Rock, and rock, and rock,  
Over the falling, rising watery world,  
Sail, beautiful ship, along the leaping  
main ;  
The chirping land-birds follow flock on  
flock  
To light on a warmer plain.  
White as weaned lambs the little wave-  
lets curled,  
Fall over in harmless play,  
As these do far away ;  
Sail, bird of doom, along the shimmer-  
ing sea,  
All under thy broad wings that over-  
shadow thee.

II.

I am so tired,  
If I would comfort me, I know not  
how,  
For I have seen thee, lad, as I de-  
sired,  
And I have nothing left to long for  
now.  
Nothing at all. And did I wait for  
thee,  
Often and often, while the light  
grew dim,

And through the lilac branches I  
could see,  
Under a saffron sky, the purple  
rim  
O' the heaving moorland? Ay. And  
then would float  
Up from behind — as it were a golden  
boat,  
Freighted with fancies, all o' the won-  
der of life,  
Love — such a slender moon, going  
up and up,  
Waxing so fast from night to night,  
And swelling like an orange flower-  
bud, bright,  
Fated, methought, to round as to a  
golden cup,  
And hold to my two lips life's best of  
wine.  
Most beautiful crescent moon,  
Ship of the sky!  
Across the unfurrowed reaches sail-  
ing high.  
Methought that it would come my  
way full soon,  
Laden with blessings that were all, all  
mine, —  
A golden ship, with balm and spi-  
ceries rife,  
That ere its day was done should  
hear thee call me wife.

III.

All over! the celestial sign hath failed ;  
The orange flower-bud shuts ; the ship  
hath sailed,  
And sunk behind the long low-lying  
hills.  
The love that fed on daily kisses  
dieth ;  
The love kept warm by nearness lieth,  
Wounded and wan ;  
The love hope nourished bitter tears  
distils,  
And faints with naught to feed  
upon.  
Only there stirreth very deep below  
The hidden beating slow,  
And the blind yearning, and the long,  
drawn breath  
Of the love that conquers death.

## IV.

Had we not loved full long, and lost all  
 fear,  
 My ever, my only dear?  
 Yes; and I saw thee start upon thy  
 way,  
 So sure that we should meet  
 Upon our trysting-day.  
 And even absence then to me was  
 sweet,  
 Because it brought me time to brood  
 Upon thy dearness in the solitude.  
 But ah! to stay, and stay,  
 And let that moon of April wane it-  
 self away,  
 And let the lovely May  
 Make ready all her buds for June;  
 And let the glossy finch forego her  
 tune  
 That she brought with her in the  
 spring,  
 And nevertheless, I think, to me can  
 sing;  
 And then to lead thee home another  
 bride,  
 In the sultry summer-tide,  
 And all forget me save for shame  
 full sore,  
 That made thee pray me, absent, "See  
 my face no more."

## V.

O hard, most hard! But while my  
 fretted heart,  
 Shut out, shut down, and full of  
 pain,  
 Sobbed to itself apart,  
 Ached to itself in vain,  
 One came who loveth me  
 As I love thee. . . .  
 And let my God remember him for  
 this,  
 As I do hope He will forget thy kiss,  
 Nor visit on thy stately head  
 Aught that thy mouth hath sworn, or  
 thy two eyes have said. . . .  
 He came, and it was dark. He came,  
 and sighed  
 Because he knew the sorrow, — whis-  
 pering low,

And fast, and thick, as one that speaks  
 by rote:

"The vessel lieth in the river reach,  
 A mile above the beach,  
 And she will sail at the turning o' the  
 tide."

He said, "I have a boat,  
 And were it good to go,  
 And un beholden in the vessel's wake  
 Look on the man thou lovedst, and  
 forgive,  
 As he embarks, a shameful fugitive.  
 Come, then, with me."

## VI.

O, how he sighed! The little stars  
 did wink,  
 And it was very dark. I gave my  
 hand, —  
 He led me out across the pasture  
 land,  
 And through the narrow croft,  
 Down to the river's brink.  
 When thou wast full in spring, thou  
 little sleepy thing,  
 The yellow flags that brodered thee  
 would stand  
 Up to their chins in water, and full oft  
 We pulled them and the other shining  
 flowers,  
 That all are gone to-day:  
 We two, that had so many things to  
 say,  
 So many hopes to render clear:  
 And they are all gone after thee, my  
 dear, —  
 Gone after those sweet hours,  
 That tender light, that balmy rain;  
 Gone "as a wind that passeth  
 away,  
 And cometh not again."

## VII.

I only saw the stars, — I could not  
 see  
 The river, — and they seemed to lie  
 As far below as the other stars were  
 high.  
 I trembled like a thing about to  
 die:  
 It was so awful 'neath the majesty

Of that great crystal height, that  
 overhung  
 The blackness at our feet,  
 Unseen to fleet and fleet  
 The flocking stars among,  
 And only hear the dipping of the  
 oar,  
 And the small wave's caressing of the  
 darksome shore.

## VIII.

Less real it was than any dream.  
 Ah me! to hear the bending willows  
 shiver,  
 As we shot quickly from the silent  
 river,  
 And felt the swaying and the flow  
 That bore us down the deeper, wider  
 stream,  
 Whereto its nameless waters go:  
 O! I shall always, when I shut mine  
 eyes,  
 See that weird sight again;  
 The lights from anchored vessels  
 hung;  
 The phantom moon, that sprung  
 Suddenly up in dim and angry wise  
 From the rim o' the moaning  
 main,  
 And touched with elfin light  
 The two long oars whereby we made  
 our flight  
 Along the reaches of the night;  
 Then furrowed up a lowering cloud,  
 Went in, and left us darker than  
 before,  
 To feel our way as the midnight watches  
 wore,  
 And lie in HER lee, with mournful faces  
 bowed,  
 That should receive and bear with her  
 away  
 The brightest portion of my sunniest  
 day,—  
 The laughter of the land, the sweetness  
 of the shore.

## IX.

And I beheld thee: saw the lantern  
 flash  
 Down on thy face when thou didst  
 climb the side.

And thou wert pale, pale as the patient  
 bride  
 That followed: both a little sad,  
 Leaving of home and kin. Thy cour-  
 age glad,  
 That once did bear thee on,  
 That brow of thine had lost; the fervor  
 rash  
 Of unforeboding youth thou hadst fore-  
 gone.  
 O, what a little moment, what a crumb  
 Of comfort for a heart to feed upon!  
 And that was all its sum:  
 A glimpse, and not a meeting, —  
 A drawing near by night,  
 To sigh to thee an unacknowledged  
 greeting,  
 And all between the flashing of a  
 light  
 And its retreating.

## X.

Then after, ere she spread her wafting  
 wings,  
 The ship, — and weighed her anchor to  
 depart,  
 We stole from her dark lee, like guilty  
 things;  
 And there was silence in my heart,  
 And silence in the upper and the nether  
 deep.  
 O sleep! O sleep!  
 Do not forget me. Sometimes come  
 and sweep,  
 Now I have nothing left, thy healing  
 hand  
 Over the lids that crave thy visits  
 bland,  
 Thou kind, thou comforting one:  
 For I have seen his face, as I de-  
 sired,  
 And all my story is done.  
 O, I am tired!

## THE MIDDLE WATCH.

## I.

I WOKE in the night, and the darkness  
 was heavy and deep;  
 I had known it was dark in my  
 sleep,

And I rose and looked out,  
And the fathomless vault was all sparkling,  
set thick round about  
With the ancient inhabitants silent, and  
wheeling too far

For man's heart, like a voyaging frigate,  
to sail, where remote

In the sheen of their glory they float,  
Or man's soul, like a bird, to fly near,  
of their beams to partake,

And dazed in their wake,

Drink day that is born of a star.

I murmured, "Remoteness and greatness,  
how deep you are set,

How afar in the rim of the whole ;

You know nothing of me, nor of man,  
nor of earth, O, nor yet

Of our light-bearer, — drawing the  
marvellous moons as they roll,

Of our regent, the sun.

I look on you trembling, and think, in  
the dark with my soul,

"How small is our place 'mid the kingdoms  
and nations of God :

These are greater than we, every  
one."

And there falls a great fear, and a  
dread cometh over, that cries,

"O my hope! Is there any mistake?

Did He speak? Did I hear? Did I  
listen aright, if He spake?

Did I answer Him duly? for surely I  
now am awake,

If never I woke until now."

And a light, baffling wind, that leads  
nowhither, plays on my brow.

As a sleep, I must think on my day, of  
my path as untrod,

Or trodden in dreams, in a dreamland  
whose coasts are a doubt ;

Whose countries recede from my  
thoughts, as they grope round  
about,

And vanish, and tell me not how.

Be kind to our darkness, O Fashioner,  
dwelling in light,

And feeding the lamps of the sky ;  
Look down upon this one, and let it be

sweet in Thy sight,

I pray Thee, to-night.

O watch whom Thou madest to dwell  
on its soil, Thou Most High!

For this is a world full of sorrow (there  
may be but one) ;

Keep watch o'er its dust, else Thy  
children for aye are undone,

For this is a world where we die.

## II.

With that, a still voice in my spirit that  
moved and that yearned

(There fell a great calm while it  
spake),

I had heard it erewhile, but the noises  
of life are so loud,

That sometimes it dies in the cry of the  
street and the crowd :

To the simple it cometh, — the child, or  
asleep, or awake,

And they know not from whence ; of  
its nature the wise never learned

By his wisdom ; its secret the worker  
ne'er earned

By his toil ; and the rich among men  
never bought with his gold ;

Nor the times of its visiting monarchs  
controlled,

Nor the jester put down with his  
jeers

(For it moves where it will), nor  
its season the aged discerned

By thought, in the ripeness of  
years.

O elder than reason, and stronger than  
will!

A voice, when the dark world is  
still :

Whence cometh it? Father Immortal,  
Thou knowest! and we, —

We are sure of that witness, that sense  
which is sent us of Thee ;

For it moves, and it yearns in its fellow-  
ship mighty and dread,

And let down to our hearts it is touch-  
ed by the tears that we shed ;

It is more than all meanings, and over  
all strife ;

On its tongue are the laws of our  
life,

And it counts up the times of the  
dead.

## III.

I will fear you, O stars, never more.  
 I have felt it! Go on, while the  
 world is asleep,  
 Golden islands, fast moored in God's  
 infinite deep.  
 Hark, hark to the words of sweet fashion,  
 the harpings of yore!  
 How they sang to Him, seer and saint,  
 in the far away lands:  
 "The heavens are the work of  
 Thy hands;  
 They shall perish, but Thou shalt  
 endure;  
 Yea, they all shall wax old, —  
 But Thy throne is established, O God,  
 and Thy years are made sure;  
 They shall perish, but Thou shalt  
 endure, —  
 They shall pass like a tale that is  
 told."

Doth He answer, the Ancient of  
 Days?  
 Will He speak in the tongue and  
 the fashion of men?  
 (Hist! hist! while the heaven-hung  
 multitudes shine in His praise,  
 His language of old.) Nay, He spoke  
 with them first; it was then  
 They lifted their eyes to His  
 throne:  
 "They shall call on Me, 'Thou art our  
 Father, our God, Thou alone!'  
 For I made them, I led them in deserts  
 and desolate ways;  
 I have found them a Ransom Di-  
 vine;  
 I have loved them with love everlasting,  
 the children of men;  
 I swear by Myself, they are  
 Mine."

## THE MORNING WATCH.

THE COMING IN OF THE "MER-  
 MAIDEN."

THE moon is bleached as white as  
 wool,  
 And just dropping under;

Every star is gone but three,  
 And they hang far asunder, —  
 There's a sea-ghost all in gray,  
 A tall shape of wonder!

I am not satisfied with sleep, —  
 The night is not ended.  
 But look how the sea-ghost comes,  
 With wan skirts extended,  
 Stealing up in this weird hour,  
 When light and dark are blended.

A vessel! To the old pier end  
 Her happy course she's keeping;  
 I heard them name her yesterday:  
 Some were pale with weeping;  
 Some with their heart-hunger sighed;  
 She's in, — and they are sleeping.

O! now with fancied greetings blest,  
 They comfort their long aching:  
 The sea of sleep hath borne to them  
 What would not come with waking,  
 And the dreams shall most be true  
 In their blissful breaking.

The stars are gone, the rose-bloom  
 comes, —  
 No blush of maid is sweeter;  
 The red sun, half way out of bed,  
 Shall be the first to greet her.  
 None tell the news, yet sleepers wake,  
 And rise, and run to meet her.

Their lost they have, they hold; from  
 pain  
 A keener bliss they borrow.  
 How natural is joy, my heart!  
 How easy after sorrow!  
 For once, the best is come that hope  
 Promised them "to-morrow."

CONCLUDING SONG OF  
 DAWN.

(*Old English Manner.*)

A MORN OF MAY.

ALL the clouds about the sun lay up in  
 golden creases  
 (Merry rings the maiden's voice that  
 sings at dawn of day);

Lambkins woke and skipped around to  
dry their dewy fleeces,  
So sweetly as she carolled, all on a  
morn of May.

Quoth the Sergeant, "Here I'll halt;  
here's wine of joy for drinking;  
To my heart she sets her hand, and in  
the strings doth play;  
All among the daffodils, and fairer to  
my thinking,  
And fresh as milk and roses, she sits  
this morn of May."

Quoth the Sergeant, "Work is work,  
but any ye might make me,  
If I worked for you, dear lass, I'd  
count my holiday.  
I'm your slave for good and all, an' if  
ye will but take me,  
So sweetly as ye carol upon this morn  
of May."

"Medals count for worth," quoth she,  
"and scars are worn for honor;  
But a slave an' if ye be, kind wooer, go  
your way."  
All the nodding daffodils woke up  
and laughed upon her.  
O! sweetly did she carol, all on that  
morn of May.

Gladsome leaves upon the bough, they  
fluttered fast and faster,  
Fretting brook, till he would speak, did  
chide the dull delay:  
"Beauty! when I said a slave, I think  
I meant a master;  
So sweetly as ye carol all on this morn  
of May.

"Lass, I love you! Love is strong, and  
some men's hearts are tender."  
Far she sought o'er wood and wold,  
but found not aught to say;  
Mounting lark nor mantling cloud would  
any counsel render,  
Though sweetly she had carolled upon  
that morn of May.

Shy, she sought the wooer's face, and  
deemed the wooing mended;  
Proper man he was, good sooth, and  
one would have his way:

So the lass was made a wife, and so the  
song was ended.

O! sweetly she did carol all on that  
morn of May.



## A STORY OF DOOM.

### BOOK I.

NILORIYA said to Noah, "What aileth  
thee,  
My master, unto whom is my desire,  
The father of my sons?" He an-  
swered her,  
"Mother of many children, I have  
heard  
The Voice again." "Ah, me!" she  
saith, "ah, me!  
What spake it?" and with that Niloriya  
sighed.

This when the Master-builder heard,  
his heart  
Was sad in him, the while he sat at  
home  
And rested after toil. The steady rap  
O' the shipwright's hammer sounding  
up the vale  
Did seem to mock him; but her dis-  
taff down  
Niloriya laid, and to the doorplace  
went,  
Parted the purple covering seemly  
hung  
Before it, and let in the crimson light  
Of the descending sun. Then looked  
he forth, —  
Looked, and beheld the hollow where  
the ark  
Was a-preparing; where the dew dis-  
tilled  
All night from leaves of old lign aloe-  
trees,  
Upon the gliding river; where the  
palm,  
The almag, and the gophir shot their  
heads  
Into the crimson brede that dyed the  
world:  
And lo! he marked — unwieldy, dark,  
and huge —



The ship, his glory and his grief, — too  
vast  
For that still river's floating, — build-  
ing far  
From mightier streams, amid the pas-  
toral dells  
Of shepherd kings.

Niloiya spake again :  
"What said the Voice, thou well-be-  
loved man?"  
He, laboring with his thought that  
troubled him,  
Spoke on behalf of God: "Behold,"  
said he,  
"A little handful of unlovely dust  
He fashioned to a lordly grace, and  
when  
He laughed upon its beauty, it waxed  
warm,  
And with His breath awoke a living  
soul.

"Shall not the Fashioner command  
His work?  
And who am I, that, if he whisper,  
'Rise,  
Go forth upon Mine errand,' should  
reply,  
'Lord, God, I love the woman and her  
sons, —  
I love not scorning; I beseech Thee,  
God,  
Have me excused.'"

She answered him, "Tell on."  
And he continuing, reasoned with his  
soul:  
"What though I — like some goodly  
lama sunk  
In meadow grass, eating her way at  
ease,  
Unseen of them that pass, and asking  
not  
A wider prospect than of yellow flowers  
That nod above her head — should lay  
me down,  
And willingly forget this high behest,  
There should be yet no tarrying. Fur-  
thermore,  
Though I went forth to cry against the  
doom,

Earth crieth louder, and she draws it  
down:  
It hangeth balanced over us; she cri-  
eth,  
And it shall fall. O! as for me, my  
life  
Is bitter, looking onward, for I know  
That in the fulness of the time shall  
dawn  
That day: my preaching shall not  
bring forth fruit,  
Though for its sake I leave thee. I  
shall float  
Upon the abhorred sea, that mankind  
hate,  
With thee and thine."

She answered: "God forbid!  
For, sir, though men be evil, yet the  
deep  
They dread, and at the last will surely  
turn  
To Him, and He, long-suffering, will  
forgive,  
And chide the waters back to their  
abyss,  
To cover the pits where doleful creat-  
ures feed.  
Sir, I am much afraid; I would not  
hear  
Of riding on the waters: look you,  
sir,  
Better it were to die with you by hand  
Of them that hate us, than to live, ah  
me!  
Rolling among the furrows of the un-  
quiet,  
Unconsecrate, unfriendly, dreadful  
sea."

He saith again: "I pray thee, woman,  
peace,  
For thou wilt enter, when that day ap-  
pears,  
The fateful ship."

"My lord," quoth she, "I will.  
But O, good sir, be sure of this, be sure  
The Master calleth; for the time is  
long  
That thou hast warned the world:  
thou art but here

Three days ; the song of welcoming but  
 now  
 Is ended. I behold thee, I am glad :  
 And wilt thou go again? Husband, I  
 say,  
 Be sure who't is that calleth ; O, be  
 sure,  
 Be sure. My mother's ghost came up  
 last night,  
 Whilst I thy beard, held in my hands,  
 did kiss,  
 Leaning anear thee, wakeful through  
 my love,  
 And watchful of thee till the moon  
 went down.

"She never loved me since I went with  
 thee  
 To sacrifice among the hills: she  
 smelt  
 The holy smoke, and could no more  
 divine  
 Till the new moon. I saw her ghost  
 come up ;  
 It had a snake with a red comb of fire  
 Twisted about its waist, — the doggish  
 head  
 Lolled on its shoulder, and so leered at  
 me.  
 'This woman might be wiser,' quoth  
 the ghost ;  
 'Shall there be husbands for her found  
 below,  
 When she comes down to us? O, fool!  
 O, fool!  
 She must not let her man go forth, to  
 leave  
 Her desolate, and reap the whole  
 world's scorn,  
 A harvest for himself.' With that they  
 passed."

He said: "My crystal drop of perfect-  
 ness,  
 I pity thee ; it was an evil ghost :  
 Thou wilt not heed the counsel?" "I  
 will not,"  
 Quoth she ; "I am loyal to the Highest.  
 Him  
 I hold by even as thou, and deem Him  
 best.  
 Sir, am I fairer than when last we  
 met?"

"God add," said he, "unto thy much  
 yet more,  
 As I do think thou art." "And think  
 you, sir,"  
 Niloiya saith, "that I have reached  
 the prime?"  
 He answering, "Nay, not yet." "I  
 would 'twere so,"  
 She plaineth, "for the daughters mock  
 at me:  
 Her locks forbear to grow, they say, so  
 sore  
 She pineth for the Master. Look you,  
 sir,  
 They reach but to the knee. But  
 thou art come,  
 And all goes merrier, Eat, my lord, of  
 all  
 My supper that I set, and afterward  
 Tell me, I pray thee, somewhat of thy  
 way ;  
 Else shall I be despised as Adam was,  
 Who compassed not the learning of his  
 sons,  
 But, grave and silent, oft would lower  
 his head  
 And ponder, following of great Isha's  
 feet,  
 When she would walk with her fair  
 brow upraised,  
 Scorning the children that she bare to  
 him."

"Ay," quoth the Master ; "but they  
 did amiss  
 When they despised their father :  
 knowest thou that?"

"Sure he was foolisher," Niloiya saith,  
 "Than any that came after. Further-  
 more,  
 He had not heart nor courage for to  
 rule :  
 He let the mastery fall from his slack  
 hand.  
 Had not our glorious mother still borne  
 up  
 His weakness, chid with him, and sat  
 apart,  
 And listened, when the fit came over  
 him  
 To talk on his lost garden, he had sunk  
 Into the slave of slaves."

"Nay, thou must think  
 How he had dwelt long, God's loved  
 husbandman,  
 And looked in hope among the tribes  
 for one  
 To be his fellow, ere great Isha, once  
 Waking, he found at his left side, and  
 knew  
 The deep delight of speech." So  
 Noah, and thus  
 Added, "And therefore was his loss  
 the more;  
 For though the creatures he had singled  
 out  
 His favorites, dared for him the fiery  
 sword  
 And followed after him, — shall bleat of  
 lamb  
 Console one for the foregone talk of  
 God?  
 Or in the afternoon, his faithful dog,  
 Fawning upon him, make his heart  
 forget  
 At such a time, and such a time, to  
 have heard  
 What he shall hear no more?"

"O, as for him,  
 It was for this that he full oft would  
 stop,  
 And, lost in thought, stand and revolve  
 that deed,  
 Sad muttering, 'Woman! we reproach  
 thee not;  
 Though thou didst eat mine immor-  
 tality;  
 Earth, be not sorry; I was free to  
 choose.'  
 Wonder not, therefore, if he walked  
 forlorn.  
 Was not the helpmeet given to raise  
 him up  
 From his contentment with the lower  
 things?  
 Was she not somewhat that he could  
 not rule  
 Beyond the action, that he could not  
 have  
 By the mere holding, and that still as-  
 pired  
 And drew him after her? So, when  
 deceived  
 She fell by great desire to rise, he fell

By loss of upward drawing, when she  
 took  
 An evil tongue to be her counsellor:  
 'Death is not as the death of lower  
 things,  
 Rather a glorious change, begrudged  
 of Heaven,  
 A change to being as gods,' — he from  
 her hand,  
 Upon reflection, took of death that hour,  
 And ate it (not the death that she had  
 dared);  
 He ate it knowing. Then divisions  
 came.  
 She, like a spirit strayed who lost the  
 way,  
 Too venturesome, among the farther  
 stars,  
 And hardly cares, because it hardly  
 hopes  
 To find the path to heaven; in bitter  
 wise  
 Did bear to him degenerate seed, and  
 he,  
 Once having felt her upward drawing,  
 longed,  
 And yet aspired, and yearned to be re-  
 stored,  
 Albeit she drew no more."

"Sir, ye speak well,"  
 Niloiya saith, "but yet the mother sits  
 Higher than Adam. He did under-  
 stand  
 Discourse of birds and all four-footed  
 things,  
 But she had knowledge of the many  
 tribes  
 Of angels and their tongues; their  
 playful ways  
 And greetings when they met. Was  
 she not wise?  
 They say she knew much that she never  
 told,  
 And had a voice that called to her as  
 thou."

"Nay," quoth the Master-shipwright,  
 "who am I  
 That I should answer? As for me,  
 poor man,  
 Here is my trouble: 'if there be a  
 Voice,'

At first I cried, 'let me behold the  
mouth  
That uttereth it.' Thereon it held its  
peace.

But afterward, I, journeying up the  
hills,  
Did hear it hollower than an echo  
fallen

Across some clear abyss; and I did  
stop,

And ask of all my company, 'What  
cheer?

If there be spirits abroad that call to  
us,

Sirs, hold your peace and hear.' So  
they gave heed,

And one man said, 'It is the small  
ground-doves

That peck upon the stony hillocks;'  
one,

'It is the mammoth in yon cedar swamp  
That cheweth in his dream;'  
and one,

'My lord,  
It is the ghost of him that yesternight

We slew, because he grudged to yield  
his wife

To thy great father, when he peaceably  
Did send to take her.' Then I an-  
swered, 'Pass,'

And they went on; and I did lay mine  
ear

Close to the earth; but there came up  
therefrom

No sound, nor any speech; I waited  
long,

And in the saying, 'I will mount my  
beast

And on,' I was as one that in a trance  
Beholdeth what is coming, and I saw

Great waters and a ship; and somewhat  
spake,

'Lo, this shall be; let him that heareth  
it,

And seeth it, go forth to warn his kind,  
For I will drown the world.'

Niloiya saith,  
"Sir, was that all that ye went forth  
upon?"

The Master, he replieth, "Ay, at first,  
That same was all; but many days

went by,  
While I did reason with my heart and  
hope

For more, and struggle to remain, and  
think,

'Let me be certain;'  
and so think  
again,

'The counsel is but dark; would I had  
more!

When I have more to guide me, I will  
go.'

And afterward, when reasoned on too  
much,

It seemed remoter, then I only said,  
'O, would I had the same again;'  
and  
still

I had it not.

"Then at the last I cried,  
'If the unseen be silent, I will speak  
And certify my meaning to myself.

Say that He spoke, then He will make  
that good

Which He hath spoken. Therefore it  
were best

To go, and do His bidding. All the  
earth

Shall hear the judgment so, and none  
may cry

When the doom falls, "Thou God art  
hard on us;

We knew not Thou wert angry. O!  
we are lost,

Only for lack of being warned."

"But say  
That He spoke not, and merely it befell  
That I being weary had a dream.

Why, so  
He could not suffer damage; when the  
time

Was past, and that I threatened had  
not come,

Men would cry out on me, haply me  
kill,

For troubling their content. They  
would not swear

"God, that did send this man, is proved  
untrue,"

But rather, "Let him die; he lied to  
us;

God never sent him." Only Thou,  
great King,

Knowest if Thou didst speak or no. I  
leave

The matter here. If Thou wilt speak  
again,

I go in gladness ; if thou wilt not speak,  
 Nay, if Thou never didst, I not the  
 less  
 Shall go, because I have believed,  
 what time  
 I seemed to hear Thee, and the going  
 stands  
 With memory of believing.' Then I  
 washed,  
 And did array me in the sacred gown,  
 And take a lamb."

"Ay, sir," Niloiya sighed,  
 "I following, and I knew not anything  
 Till, the young lamb asleep in thy two  
 arms,  
 We, moving up among the silent hills,  
 Paused in a grove to rest ; and many  
 slaves  
 Came near to make obeisance, and to  
 bring  
 Wood for the sacrifice, and turf and  
 fire.  
 Then in their hearing thou didst say to  
 me,  
 'Behold, I know thy good fidelity,  
 And theirs that are about us ; they  
 would guard  
 The mountain passes, if it were my  
 will  
 Awhile to leave thee ;' and the pygmies  
 laughed  
 For joy, that thou wouldst trust inferior  
 things ;  
 And put their heads down, as their  
 manner is,  
 To touch our feet. They laughed, but  
 sore I wept ;  
 Sir, I could weep now ; ye did ill to go  
 If that was all your bidding ; I had  
 thought  
 God drave thee, and thou couldst not  
 choose but go."

Then said the son of Lamech, "After-  
 ward,  
 When I had left thee, He whom I had  
 served  
 Met with me in the visions of the night,  
 To comfort me for that I had with-  
 drawn  
 From thy dear company. He sware to me

That no man should molest thee, no,  
 nor touch  
 The bordering of mine utmost field. I  
 say,  
 When I obeyed, He made His matters  
 plain.  
 With whom could I have left thee. but  
 with them,  
 Born in thy mother's house, and bound  
 thy slaves?"

She said, "I love not pygmies ; they  
 are naught."  
 And he, "Who made them pygmies?"  
 Then she pushed  
 Her veiling hair back from her round,  
 soft eyes,  
 And answered, wondering, "Sir, my  
 mothers did ;  
 Ye know it." And he drew her near  
 to sit  
 Beside him on the settle, answering,  
 "Ay."  
 And they went on to talk as writ below,  
 If any one shall read :

"Thy mother did,  
 And they that went before her. Think-  
 est thou  
 That they did well?"

"They had been overcome ;  
 And when the angered conquerors  
 drave them out,  
 Behooved them find some other way  
 to rule,  
 They did but use their wits. Hath  
 not man aye  
 Been cunning in dominion, among  
 beasts  
 To breed for size or swiftness, or for  
 sake  
 Of the white wool he loveth, at his  
 choice?  
 What harm if coveting a race of men  
 That could but serve, they sought  
 among their thralls,  
 Such as were low of stature, men and  
 maids ;  
 Ay, and of feeble will and quiet mind?  
 Did they not spend much gear to gather  
 out  
 Such as I tell of, and for matching  
 them

One with another for a thousand years?  
 What harm, then, if there came of it a  
     race,  
 Inferior in their wits, and in their size,  
 And well content to serve?"

"What harm?" thou sayest.  
 My wife doth ask, "What harm?"

"Your pardon, sir.  
 I do remember that there came one  
     day,  
 Two of the grave old angels that God  
     made,  
 When first He invented life (right old  
     they were,  
 And plain, and venerable); and they  
     said,  
 Rebuking of my mother as with hers  
 She sat, 'Ye do not well, you wives of  
     men,  
 To match your wit against the Maker's  
     will,  
 And for your benefit to lower the stamp  
 Of His fair image, which He set at first  
 Upon man's goodly frame; ye do not  
     well  
 To treat His likeness even as ye treat  
 The bird and beast that perish.'"

"Said they aught  
 To appease the ancients, or to speak  
     them fair?"

"How know I? 'Twas a slave that  
     told it me.  
 My mother was full old when I was  
     born,  
 And that was in her youth. What  
     think you, sir?  
 Did not the giants likewise ill?"

"To that  
 I have no answer ready. If a man,  
 When each one is against his fellow,  
     rule,  
 Or unmolested dwell, or unreprieved,  
 Because, for size and strength, he  
     standeth first,  
 He will thereof be glad; and if he say,  
 'I will to wife choose me a stately maid,  
 And leave a goodly offspring;' 'sooth,  
     I think,

He sinneth not; for good to him and  
     his  
 He would be strong and great. Thy  
     people's fault  
 Was, that for ill to others, they did  
     plot  
 To make them weak and small."

"But yet they steal  
 Or take in war the strongest maids, and  
     such  
 As are of highest stature; ay, and oft  
 They fight among themselves for that  
     same cause.  
 And they are proud against the King  
     of heaven:  
 They hope in course of ages they shall  
     come  
 To be as strong as He."

The Master said,  
 "I will not hear thee talk thereof; my  
     heart  
 Is sick for all this wicked world. Fair  
     wife,  
 I am right weary. Call thy slaves to  
     thee,  
 And bid that they prepare the sleeping  
     place.  
 O would that I might rest! I fain  
     would rest,  
 And, no more wandering, tell a thank-  
     less world  
 My never-heeded tale!"

With that she called.  
 The moon was up, and some few stars  
     were out,  
 While heavy at the heart he walked  
     abroad  
 To meditate before his sleep. And  
     yet  
 Niloiya pondered, "Shall my master  
     go?  
 And will my master go? What 'vail-  
     eth it,  
 That he doth spend himself, over the  
     waste  
 A-wandering, till he reach outlandish  
     folk,  
 That mock his warning? O, what  
     'vaileth it,  
 That he doth lavish wealth to build yon  
     ark,

Whereat the daughters, when they eat  
 with me,  
 Laugh? O my heart! I would the  
 Voice were stilled.  
 Is not he happy? Who, of all the  
 earth,  
 Obeyeth like to me? Have not I  
 learned  
 From his dear mouth to utter seemly  
 words,  
 And lay the powers my mother gave  
 me by?  
 Have I made offerings to the dragon?  
 Nay.  
 And I am faithful, when he leaveth  
 me  
 Lonely betwixt the peaked mountain  
 tops  
 In this long valley, where no stranger  
 foot  
 Can come without my will. He shall  
 not go.  
 Not yet, not yet! But three days—  
 only three—  
 Beside me, and a-muttering on the  
 third,  
 ‘I have heard the Voice again.’ Be  
 dull, O dull,  
 Mind and remembrance! Mother, ye  
 did ill;  
 ’Tis hard unlawful knowledge not to  
 use.  
 Why, O dark mother! opened ye the  
 way?”  
 Yet when he entered, and did lay aside  
 His costly robe of sacrifice,—the robe  
 Wherein he had been offering, ere the  
 sun  
 Went down,—forgetful of her mother’s  
 craft,  
 She lovely and submiss did mourn to  
 him:  
 “Thou wilt not go,—I pray thee do  
 not go,  
 Till thou hast seen thy children.”  
 And he said,  
 “I will not. I have cried, and have  
 prevailed:  
 To-morrow it is given me by the Voice  
 Upon a four-days’ journey to proceed,  
 And follow down the river, till its  
 waves  
 Are swallowed in the sand, where no  
 flesh dwells.

“‘There,’ quoth the Unrevealed, ‘we  
 shall meet,  
 And I will counsel thee; and thou  
 shalt turn  
 And rest thee with the mother, and  
 with them  
 She bare.’ Now, therefore, when the  
 morn appears,  
 Thou fairest among women, call thy  
 slaves,  
 And bid them yoke the steers, and  
 spread thy car  
 With robes, the choicest work of cunning  
 hands;  
 Array thee in thy rich apparel, deck  
 Thy locks with gold; and while the  
 hollow vale  
 I thread beside yon river, go thou forth  
 Between the mountains to my father’s  
 house,  
 And let thy slaves make all obeisance  
 due,  
 And take and lay an offering at his feet.  
 Then light, and cry to him, ‘Great  
 king, the son  
 Of old Methuselah, thy son hath sent  
 To fetch the growing maids, his children,  
 home.’”

“Sir,” quoth the woman, “I will do  
 this thing,  
 So thou keep faith with me, and yet return.  
 But will the Voice, think you, forbear  
 to chide,  
 Nor that Unseen, who calleth, buffet  
 thee,  
 And drive thee on?”

He saith, “It will keep faith.  
 Fear not. I have prevailed, for I besought,  
 And lovingly it answered. I shall rest,  
 And dwell with thee till after my three  
 sons  
 Come from the chase.” She said, “I  
 let them forth  
 In fear, for they are young. Their  
 slaves are few.  
 The giant elephants be cunning folk;  
 They lie in ambush, and will draw men  
 on  
 To follow,—then will turn and tread  
 them down.”

"Thy father's house unwisely planned," said he,  
 "To drive them down upon the growing corn  
 Of them that were their foes; for now, behold,  
 They suffer while the unwieldy beasts delay  
 Retirement to their lands, and, meanwhile, pound  
 The damp, deep meadows, to a pulpy mash;  
 Or wallowing in the waters foul them; nay,  
 Tread down the banks, and let them forth to flood  
 Their cities; or, assailed and falling, shake  
 The walls, and taint the wind, ere thirty men,  
 Over the hairy terror piling stones  
 Or earth, prevail to cover it."

She said,

"Husband, I have been sorry, thinking oft  
 I would my sons were home; but now so well  
 Methinks it is with me, that I am fain  
 To wish they might delay, for thou wilt dwell  
 With me till after they return, and thou  
 Hast set thine eyes upon them. Then, ah me!  
 I must sit joyless in my place; bereft,  
 As trees that suddenly have dropped their leaves,  
 And dark as nights that have no moon."

She spake:

The hope o' the world did hearken, but reply  
 Made none. He left his hand on her fair locks  
 As she lay sobbing; and the quietness  
 Of night began to comfort her, the fall  
 Of far-off waters, and the winged wind  
 That went among the trees. The patient hand,  
 Moreover, that was steady, wrought with her,  
 Until she said, "What wilt thou? Nay, I know."

I therefore answer what thou utterest not.  
*Thou lovest me well, and not for thine own will*  
*Consentest to depart.* What more?  
 Ay, this:  
*I do avow that He which calleth thee*  
*Hath right to call; and I do swear the Voice*  
*Shall have no let of me to do Its will."*

## BOOK II.

Now ere the sunrise, while the morning star  
 Hung yet behind the pine-bough, woke and prayed  
 The world's great shipwright, and his soul was glad  
 Because the Voice was favorable. Now  
 Began the tap o' the hammer, now ran forth  
 The slaves preparing food. They therefore ate  
 In peace together; then Niloiya forth  
 Behind the milk-white steers went on her way;  
 And the great Master-builder, down the course  
 Of the long river, on his errand sped,  
 And as he went, he thought:

[They do not well

Who, walking up a trodden path, all smooth  
 With footsteps of their fellows, and made straight  
 From town to town, will scorn at them that wonn  
 Under the covert of God's eldest trees  
 (Such as He planted with His hand, and fed  
 With dew before rain fell, till they stood close  
 And awful; drank the light up as it dropt,  
 And kept the dusk of ages at their roots), —  
 They do not well who mock at such, and cry.  
 "We peaceably, without or fault or fear,



Proceed, and miss not of our end ; but  
 these  
 Are slow and fearful: with uncertain  
 pace,  
 And ever reasoning of the way, they  
 oft,  
 After all reasoning, choose the worser  
 course,  
 And, plunged in swamp, or in the mat-  
 tured growth  
 Nigh smothered struggle, all to reach  
 a goal  
 Not worth their pains." Nor do they  
 well whose work  
 Is still to feed and shelter them and  
 theirs,  
 Get gain, and gathered store it, to  
 think scorn  
 Of those who work for a world (no  
 wages paid  
 By a Master hid in light), and sent  
 alone  
 To face a laughing multitude, whose  
 eyes  
 Are full of damaging pity, that forbears  
 To tell the harmless laborer, "Thou  
 art mad."]

And as he went, he thought: "They  
 counsel me,  
 Ay, with a kind of reason in their talk,  
 'Consider; call thy soberer thought to  
 aid;  
 Why to but one man should a message  
 come?  
 And why, if but to one, to thee? Art  
 thou  
 Above us, greater, wiser? Had He  
 sent,  
 He had willed that we should heed.  
 Then since He knoweth  
 That such as thou a wise man cannot  
 heed,  
 He did not send.' My answer, 'Great  
 and wise,  
 If He had sent with thunder, and a  
 voice  
 Leaping from heaven, ye must have  
 heard; but so  
 Ye had been robbed of choice, and,  
 like the beasts,  
 Yoked to obedience. God makes no  
 men slaves.'

They tell me, 'God is great above thy  
 thought:  
 He meddles not; and this small world  
 is ours,  
 These many hundred years we govern  
 it;  
 Old Adam, after Eden, saw Him  
 not.'  
 Then I, 'It may be He is gone to  
 knead  
 More clay. But look, my masters;  
 one of you,  
 Going to warfare, layeth up his gown,  
 His sickle, or his gold, and thinks no  
 more  
 Upon it, till young trees have waxen  
 great;  
 At last, when he returneth, he will  
 seek  
 His own. And God, shall He not do  
 the like?  
 And, having set new worlds a-rolling,  
 come  
 And say, 'I will betake Me to the  
 earth  
 That I did make;' and, having found  
 it vile,  
 Be sorry. Why should man be free,  
 you wise,  
 And not the Master?' Then they an-  
 swer, 'Fool!  
 A man shall cast a stone into the air  
 For pastime, or for lack of heed, — but  
 He!  
 Will He come fingering of His ended  
 work,  
 Fright it with His approaching face, or  
 snatch  
 One day the rolling wonder from its  
 ring,  
 And hold it quivering, as a wanton  
 child  
 Might take a nestling from its downy  
 bed,  
 And having satisfied a careless wish,  
 Go thrust it back into its place again?'  
 To such I answer, and, that doubt once  
 mine,  
 I am assured that I do speak aright:  
 'Sirs, the significance of this your  
 doubt  
 Lies in the reason of it; ye do grudge  
 That these your lands should have  
 another Lord;

Ye are not loyal, therefore ye would  
 fain  
 Your King would bide afar. But if ye  
 looked  
 For countenance and favor when He  
 came,  
 Knowing yourselves right worthy,  
 would ye care,  
 With cautious reasoning, deep and hard,  
 to prove  
 That He would never come, and would  
 your wrath  
 Be hot against a prophet? Nay, I  
 wot  
 That as a flatterer you would look on  
 him, —  
 "Full of sweet words thy mouth is: if  
 He come, —  
 We think not that He will, — but if  
 He come,  
 Would it might be to-morrow, or to-  
 night,  
 Because we look for praise." " "

Now, as he went,  
 The noontide heats came on, and he  
 grew faint;  
 But while he sat below an almug-tree,  
 A slave approached with greeting.  
 "Master, hail!"  
 He answered, "Hail! what wilt thou?"  
 Then she said,  
 "The palace of thy fathers standeth  
 nigh."  
 "I know it," quoth he; and she said  
 again,  
 "The Elder, learning thou wouldst  
 pass, hath sent  
 To fetch thee." Then he rose and  
 followed her.  
 So first they walked beneath a lofty  
 roof  
 Of living bough and tendril, woven on  
 high  
 To let no drop of sunshine through,  
 and hung  
 With gold and purple fruitage, and the  
 white  
 Thick cups of scented blossom. Un-  
 derneath,  
 Soft grew the sward and delicate, and  
 flocks  
 Of egrets, ay, and many cranes, stood  
 up,

Fanning their wings, to agitate and  
 cool  
 The noonday air, as men with heed  
 and pains  
 Had taught them, marshalling and tam-  
 ing them  
 To bear the wind in on their moving  
 wings.

So long time as a nimble slave would  
 spend  
 In milking of her cow, they walked at  
 ease;  
 Then reached the palace, all of forest  
 trunks,  
 Brought whole and set together, made.  
 Therein  
 Had dwelt old Adam, when his mighty  
 sons  
 Had finished it, and up to Eden gate  
 Had journeyed for to fetch him.  
 "Here," they said,  
 "Mother and father, ye may dwell,  
 and here  
 Forget the garden wholly." "

So he came  
 Under the doorplace, and the women  
 sat,  
 Each with her finger on her lips; but  
 he,  
 Having been called, went on, until he  
 reached  
 The jewelled settle, wrought with cun-  
 ning work  
 Of gold and ivory, whereon they wont  
 To set the Elder. All with sleekest  
 skins,  
 That striped and spotted creatures of  
 the wood  
 Had worn, the seat was covered, but  
 thereon  
 The Elder was not: by the steps there-  
 of,  
 Upon the floor, whereto his silver  
 beard  
 Did reach, he sat, and he was in his  
 trance.  
 Upon the settle many doves were per-  
 ched,  
 That set the air a-going with their  
 wings:  
 These opposite, the world's great ship-  
 wright stood

To wait the burden; and the Elder  
spake:

"Will He forget me? Would He  
might forget!

Old, old! The hope of old Methuse-  
lah

Is all in His forgetfulness." With  
that,

A slave-girl took a cup of wine, and  
crept

Anear him, saying, "Taste;" and  
when his lips

Had touched it, lo, he trembled, and  
he cried,

"Behold, I prophesy."

Then straight they fled  
That were about him, and did stand  
apart

And stop their ears. For he, from  
time to time,

Was plagued with that same fate to  
prophecy,

And spake against himself, against his  
day

And time, in words that all men did  
abhor.

Therefore, he, warning them what time  
the fit

Came on him, saved them, that they  
heard it not.

So while they fled, he cried: "I saw  
the God

Reach out of heaven His wonderful  
right hand.

Lo, lo! He dipped it in the unquiet  
sea,

And in its curvèd palm behold the ark,  
As in a vast calm lake, came floating  
on.

Ay, then, His other hand — the cursing  
hand —

He took and spread between us and the  
sun,

And all was black; the day was blotted  
out,

And horrible staggering took the  
frighted earth.

I heard the water hiss, and then me-  
thinks

The crack as of her splitting. Did  
she take

Their palaces that are my brothers  
dear,

And huddle them with all their an-  
cienry

Under into her breast? If it was black,  
How could this old man see? There

was a noise

I' the dark, and He drew back His  
hand again.

I looked — It was a dream, — let  
no man say

It was aught else. There, so — the fit  
goes by.

Sir, and my daughters, is it eventide? —  
Sooner than that, saith old Methu-  
selah,

Let the vulture lay his beak to my  
green limbs.

What! art Thou envious? — are the  
sons of men

Too wise to please Thee, and to do Thy  
will?

Methuselah, he sitteth on the ground,  
Clad in his gown of age, the pale white  
gown,

And goeth not forth to war; his  
wrinkled hands

He claspeth round his knees: old,  
very old.

Would he could steal from Thee one  
secret more —

The secret of Thy youth! O, envious  
God!

We die. The words of old Methuselah  
And his prophecy are ended."

Then the wives,  
Beholding how he trembled, and the

maids

And children, came anear, saying,  
"Who art thou

That standest gazing on the Elder? Lo,  
Thou dost not well: withdraw; for it

was thou

Whose stranger presence troubled him,  
and brought

The fit of prophecy." And he did  
turn

To look upon them, and their majesty  
And glorious beauty took away his

words;  
And, being pure among the vile, he  
cast

In his thought a veil of snow-white  
purity

Over the beauteous throng. "Thou  
dost not well,"  
They said. He answered: "Blossoms  
o' the world,  
Fruitful as fair, never in watered glade,  
Where in the youngest grass blue cups  
push forth,  
And the white lily reareth up her head,  
And purples cluster, and the saffron  
flower,  
Clear as a flame of sacrifice, breaks out,  
And every cedar-bough, made delicate  
With climbing roses, drops in white  
and red, —  
Saw I (good angels keep you in their  
care)  
So beautiful a crowd."

With that they stamped,  
Gnashed their white teeth, and, turn-  
ing, fled and spat  
Upon the floor. The Elder spake to  
him,  
Yet shaking with the burden, "Who  
art thou?"  
He answered: "I, the man whom thou  
— didst send  
To fetch through this thy woodland, do  
forbear  
To tell my name; thou lovest it not,  
great sire, —  
No, nor mine errand. To thy house  
I spake,  
Touching their beauty." "Wherefore  
dilst thou spite,"  
Quoth he, "the daughters?" and it  
seemed he lost  
Count of that prophecy, for very age,  
And from his thin lips dropt a trembling  
laugh.  
"Wicked old man," quoth he, "this  
wise old man  
I see as 't were not I. Thou bad old  
man,  
What shall be done to thee? for thou  
dilst burn  
Their babes, and strew the ashes all  
about,  
To rid the world of His white soldiers.  
Ay,  
Scenting of human sacrifice, they fled.  
Cowards! I heard them winnow their  
great wings:

They went to tell Him; but they came  
no more.  
The women hate to hear of them, so  
sore  
They grudged their little ones; and  
yet no way  
There was but that. I took it; I did  
well."

With that he fell to weeping. "Son,"  
said he,  
"Long have I hid mine eyes from stal-  
wart men,  
For it is hard to lose the majesty  
And pride and power of manhood: but  
to-day,  
Stand forth into the light, that I may  
look  
Upon thy strength, and think, EVEN  
THUS DID I,  
IN THE GLORY OF MY YOUTH, MORE  
LIKE TO GOD  
THAN LIKE HIS SOLDIERS, FACE THE  
VASSAL WORLD."

Then Noah stood forward in his maj-  
esty,  
Shouldering the golden billhook, where-  
withal  
He wont to cut his way, when tangled  
in  
The matted hayes. And down the  
opened roof  
Fell slanting beams upon his stately  
head,  
And streamed along his gown, and  
made to shine  
The jewelled sandals on his feet.

And, lo,  
The Elder cried aloud: "I prophesy.  
Behold, my son is as a fruitful field  
When all the lands are waste. The  
archers drew, —  
They drew the bow against him; they  
were fain  
To slay: but he shall live, — my son  
shall live,  
And I shall live by him in the other  
days.  
Behold the prophet of the Most High  
God:  
Hear him. Behold the hope o' the  
world, what time

She lieth under. Hear him; he shall  
 save  
 A seed alive, and sow the earth with  
 man.  
 O earth! earth! earth! a floating shell  
 of wood  
 Shall hold the remnant of thy mighty  
 lords.  
 Will this old man be in it? Sir, and  
 you,  
 My daughters, hear him! Lo, this  
 white old man  
 He sitteth on the ground. (Let be, let  
 be:  
 Why dost Thou trouble us to make our  
 tongue  
 Ring with abhorred words?) The pro-  
 phecy  
 Of the Elder, and the vision that he  
 saw,  
 They both are ended."

Then said Noah: "The life  
 Of this my lord is low for very age:  
 Why, then, with bitter words upon thy  
 tongue,  
 Father of Lamech, dost thou anger  
 Him?  
 Thou canst not strive against Him  
 now." He said:  
 "Thy feet are toward the valley, where  
 lie bones  
 Bleaching upon the desert. Did I love  
 The lithe strong lizards that I yoked  
 and set  
 To draw my car? and were they not  
 possessed?  
 Yea, all of them were liars. I loved  
 them well.  
 What did the Enemy, but on a day  
 When I behind my talking team went  
 forth,  
 They sweetly lying, so that all men  
 praised  
 Their flattering tongues and mild per-  
 suasive eyes,—  
 What did the Enemy but send His  
 slaves,  
 Angels, to cast down stones upon their  
 heads  
 And break them? Nay, I could not  
 stir abroad  
 But havoc came; they never crept or  
 flew

Beyond the shelter that I builded  
 here,  
 But straight the crowns I had set upon  
 their heads  
 Were marks for myrmidons that in the  
 clouds  
 Kept watch to crush them. Can a man  
 forgive  
 That hath been warred on thus? I will  
 not. Nay,  
 I swear it, — I, the man Methuselah."  
 The Master-shipwright, he replied,  
 "T is true,  
 Great loss was that; but they that stood  
 thy friends,  
 The wicked spirits, spoke upon their  
 tongues,  
 And cursed the God of heaven. What  
 marvel, sir,  
 If He was angered?" But the Elder  
 cried:  
 "They all are dead, — the toward  
 beasts I loved;  
 My goodly team, my joy, they all are  
 dead;  
 Their bones lie bleaching in the wilder-  
 ness:  
 And I will keep my wrath for ever-  
 more  
 Against the Enemy that slew them. Go,  
 Thou coward servant of a tyrant King,  
 Go down the desert of the bones, and  
 ask,  
 'My King, what bones are these? Me-  
 thuselah,  
 The white old man that sitteth on the  
 ground,  
 Sendeth a message, "Bid them that  
 they live,  
 And let my lizards run up every path  
 They wont to take when out of silver  
 pipes,  
 The pipes that Tubal wrought into my  
 roof,  
 I blew a sweeter cry than song-bird's  
 throat  
 Hath ever formed; and while they laid  
 their heads  
 Submiss upon my threshold, poured  
 away  
 Music that welled by heartsful out, and  
 made  
 The throats of men that heard to swell,  
 their breasts

To heave with the joy of grief; yea,  
caused the lips  
To laugh of men asleep.

Return to me  
The great wise lizards; ay, and them  
that flew  
My pursuivants before me. Let me  
yoke  
Again that multitude; and here I  
swear  
That they shall draw my car and me  
thereon  
Straight to the ship of doom. So men  
shall know  
My loyalty, that I submit, and Thou  
Shalt yet have honor, O mine Enemy,  
By me. The speech of old Methuse-  
lah."'''

Then Noah made answer, "By the  
living God,  
That is no enemy to men, great sire,  
I will not take thy message; hear thou  
Him.  
'Behold (He saith that suffereth thee),  
behold,  
The earth that I made green cries out  
to Me,  
Red with the costly blood of beauteous  
man.  
I am robbed, I am robbed (He saith);  
they sacrifice  
To evil demous of My blameless flocks,  
That I did fashion with My hand.  
Behold,  
How goodly was the world! I gave it  
thee  
Fresh from its finishing. What hast  
thou done?  
I will cry out to the waters, *Cover it,*  
*And hide it from its Father. Lo,*  
*Mine eyes*  
*Turn from it shamed.'*"

With that the old man laughed  
Full softly. "Ay," quoth he, "a  
goodly world,  
And we have done with it as we did  
list.  
Why did he give it us? Nay, look  
you, son:  
Five score they were that died in yon-  
der waste;

And if He crieth, 'Repent, be recon-  
ciled,'  
I answer, 'Nay, my lizards;' and  
again,  
If He will trouble me in this mine age,  
'Why hast Thou slain my lizards?'  
Now my speech  
Is cut away from all my other words,  
Standing alone. The Elder sweareth  
it,  
The man of many days, Methuselah."

Then answered Noah, "My Master,  
hear it not;  
But yet have patience;" and he turned  
himself,  
And down betwixt the ordered trees  
went forth,  
And in the light of evening made his  
way  
Into the waste to meet the Voice of  
God.

### BOOK III.

ABOVE the head of great Methuselah  
There lay two demons in the opened  
roof  
Invisible, and gathered up his words;  
For when the Elder prophesied, it  
came  
About, that hidden things were shown  
to them,  
And burdens that he spake against his  
time.

(But never heard them, such as dwelt  
with him;  
Their ears they stopped, and willed to  
live at ease  
In all delight; and perfect in their  
youth,  
And strong, disport them in the perfect  
world.)

Now these were fettered that they  
could not fly,  
For a certain disobedience they had  
wrought  
Against the ruler of their host; but not  
The less they loved their cause; and  
when the feet  
O' the Master-builder were no longer  
heard,

They, slipping to the sward, right pain-  
 fully  
 Did follow, for the one to the other  
 said,  
 "Behooves our master know of this ;  
 and us,  
 Should he be favorable, he may loose  
 From these our bonds."

And thus it came to pass,  
 That while at dead of night the old  
 dragon lay  
 Coiled in the cavern where he dwelt,  
 the watch  
 Pacing before it saw in middle air  
 A boat, that gleamed like fire, and on  
 it came,  
 And rocked as it drew near, and then  
 it burst  
 And went to pieces, and there fell there-  
 from,  
 Close at the cavern's mouth, two glow-  
 ing balls.

Now there was drawn a curtain nigh  
 the mouth  
 Of that deep cave, to testify of wrath.  
 The dragon had been wroth with some  
 that served,  
 And chased them from him ; and his  
 oracles,  
 That wont to drop from him, were  
 stopped, and men  
 Might only pray to him through that  
 fell web  
 That hung before him. Then did  
 whisper low  
 Some of the little spirits that, bat-like,  
 clung  
 And cluster'd round the opening.  
 "Lo," they said,  
 While gazed the watch upon those  
 glowing balls,  
 "These are like moons eclipsed ; but  
 let them lie  
 Red on the moss, and sear its dewy  
 spires,  
 Until our lord give leave to draw the  
 web,  
 And quicken reverence by his presence  
 dread,  
 For he will know and call to them by  
 name,

And they will change. At present he  
 is sick,  
 And wills that none disturb him." So  
 they lay,  
 And there was silence, for the forest  
 tribes  
 Came never near that cave. Wiser  
 than men,  
 They fled the serpent hiss that oft by  
 night  
 Came forth of it, and feared the wan  
 dusk forms  
 That stalked among the trees, and in  
 the dark  
 Those whiffs of flame that wandered up  
 the sky  
 And made the moonlight sickly.

Now, the cave  
 Was marvellous for beauty, wrought  
 with tools  
 Into the living rock, for there had  
 worked  
 All cunning men, to cut on it with signs  
 And shows, yea, all the manner of man-  
 kind.  
 The fateful apple-tree was there, a  
 bough  
 Bent with the weight of him that us  
 beguiled ;  
 And lilies of the field did seem to blow  
 And bud in the storied stone. There  
 Tubal sat,  
 Who from his harp delivered music,  
 sweet  
 As any in the spheres. Yea, more ;  
 Earth's latest wonder on the walls ap-  
 peared,  
 Unfinished, workmen clustering on its  
 ribs ;  
 And farther back, within the rock  
 hewn out,  
 Angelic figures stood, that impious  
 hands  
 Had fashioned ; many golden lamps  
 they held  
 By golden chains depending, and their  
 eyes  
 All tended in a reverent quietude  
 Toward the couch whereon the dragon  
 lay.  
 The floor was beaten gold ; the curly  
 lengths

Of his last coils lay on it, hid from  
 sight  
 With a coverlet made stiff with crust-  
 ing gems,  
 Fire-opals shooting, rubies, fierce bright  
 eyes  
 Of diamonds, or the pale green emer-  
 ald,  
 That changed their lustre when he  
 breathed.

His head,  
 Feathered with crimson combs, and all  
 his neck,  
 And half-shut fans of his admired  
 wings,  
 That in their scaly splendor put to  
 shame  
 Or gold or stone, lay on his ivory couch  
 And shivered; for the dragon suffered  
 pain:  
 He suffered and he feared. It was his  
 doom,  
 The tempter, that he never should de-  
 part  
 From the bright creature that in Para-  
 dise  
 He for his evil purpose erst possessed,  
 Until it died. Thus only, spirit of  
 might  
 And chiefest spirit of ill, could he be  
 free.

But with its nature wed, as souls of  
 men  
 Are wedded to their clay, he took the  
 dread  
 Of death and dying, and the coward  
 heart  
 Of the beast, and craven terrors of the  
 end  
 Sank him that habited within it to  
 dread  
 Disunion. He, a dark dominion erst  
 Rebellious, lay and trembled, for the  
 flesh  
 Daunted his immaterial. He was sick  
 And sorry. Great ones of the earth  
 had sent  
 Their chief musicians for to comfort  
 him,  
 Chanting his praise, the friend of man,  
 the god  
 That gave them knowledge, at so great  
 a price

And costly. Yea, the riches of the  
 mine,  
 And glorious brodered work, and woven  
 gold,  
 And all things wisely made, they at his  
 feet  
 Laid daily; for they said, "This  
 mighty one,  
 All the world wonders after him. He  
 lieth  
 Sick in his dwelling; he hath long fore-  
 gone  
 (To do us good) dominion, and a throne,  
 And his brave warfare with the Enemy,  
 So much he pitieth us that were denied  
 The gain and gladness of this knowl-  
 edge. Now  
 Shall he be certified of gratitude,  
 And smell the sacrifice that most he  
 loves."

The night was dark, but every lamp  
 gave forth  
 A tender, lustrous beam. His beau-  
 teous wings  
 The dragon fluttered, cursed awhile,  
 then turned  
 And moaned with lamentable voice, "I  
 thirst,  
 Give me to drink." Thereon stepped  
 out in haste,  
 From inner chambers, lovely minis-  
 trants,  
 Young boys, with radiant locks and  
 peaceful eyes,  
 And poured out liquor from their cups  
 to cool  
 His parchèd tongue, and kneeling held  
 it nigh  
 In jewelled basins sparkling; and he  
 lapped,  
 And was appeased, and said, "I will  
 not hide  
 Longer my much-desired face from  
 men.  
 Draw back the web of separation."  
 Then  
 With cries of gratulation ran they forth,  
 And flung it wide, and all the watch fell  
 low,  
 Each on his face, as drunk with sudden  
 joy.  
 Thus marked he, glowing on the  
 branchèd moss,



Those red rare moons, and let his serpent eyes  
Consider them full subtly, "What be these?"

Inquiring: and the little spirits said,  
"As we for thy protection (having heard

That wrathful sons of darkness walk to-night,

Such as do oft ill-use us) clustered here,  
We marked a boat afire, that sailed the skies,

And furrowed up like spray a billowy cloud,

And, lo, it went to pieces, scattering down

A rain of sparks and these two angry moons."

Then said the dragon, "Let my guard, and you,

Attendant hosts, recede;" and they went back,

And formed about the cave a widening ring,

Then, halting, stood afar; and from the cave

The snaky wonder spoke, with hissing tongue,

"If ye were Tartis and Deleisonon,  
Be Tartis and Deleisonon once more."

Then egg-like cracked the glowing balls, and forth

Started black angels, trampling hard to free

Their fettered feet from out the smoking shell.

And he said, "Tartis and Deleisonon,  
Your lord I am: draw nigh." "Thou art our lord,"

They answered, and with fettered limbs full low

They bent, and made obeisance. Furthermore,

"O fiery flying serpent, after whom  
The nations go, let thy dominion last,"

They said, "forever." And the serpent said,

"It shall: unfold your errand." They replied,

One speaking for a space, and afterward

His fellow taking up the word with fear,

And panting, "We were set to watch the mouth

Of great Methuselah. There came to him

The son of Lamech two days since."

"My lord,

They prophesied, the Elder prophesied, Unwitting, of the flood of waters, — ay,

A vision was before him, and the lands Lay under water drowned. He saw the ark, —

It floated in the Enemy's right hand."

"Lord of the lost, the son of Lamech fled

Into the wilderness to meet His voice That reigneth; and we, diligent to hear

Aught that might serve thee, followed, but, forbid

To enter, lay upon its boundary cliff,  
And wished for morning."

"When the dawn was red  
We sought the man, we marked him;  
and he prayed, —

Kneeling, he prayed in the valley, and he said —"

"Nay," quoth the serpent, "spare me, what devout

He fawning grovelled to the All-powerful;

But if of what shall hap he aught let fall,  
Speak that." They answered, "He

did pray as one

That looketh to outlive mankind, — and more,

We are certified by all his scattered words,

That HE will take from men their length of days,

And cut them off like grass in its first flower:

From henceforth this shall be."

That when he heard,  
The dragon made to the night his moan.

"And more,"  
They said, "that He above would have men know

That He doth love them, whoso will repent,

To that man He is favorable, yea,  
Will be his loving Lord."

The dragon cried,  
"The last is worse than all. O man,  
thy heart  
Is stout against His wrath. But will  
He love?  
I heard 'it rumored in the heavens of  
old  
(And doth He love?). Thou wilt not,  
canst not, stand  
Against the love of God. Dominion  
fails;  
I see it float from me, that long have  
worn  
Fetters of flesh to win it. Love of  
God!  
I cry against thee; thou art worse than  
all."

They answered, "Be not moved, ad-  
mired chief  
And trusted of mankind;" and they  
went on,  
And fed him with the prophecies that  
fell  
From the Master-shipwright in his  
prayer.

But prone  
He lay, for he was sick: at every word  
Prophetic cowering. As a bruising  
blow,  
It fell upon his head and daunted him,  
Until they ended, saying, "Prince, be-  
hold,  
Thy servants have revealed the whole."

Thereon  
He out of snaky lips did hiss forth  
thanks.  
Then said he, "Tartis and Deleisonon,  
Receive your wages." So their fetters  
fell;  
And they, retiring, lauded him, and  
cried,  
"King, reign forever." Then he  
mourned, "Amen."

And he,—being left alone,—he said:  
"A light!  
I see a light,—a star among the trees,—  
An angel." And it drew toward the  
cave,

But with its sacred feet touched not  
the grass,  
Nor lifted up the lids of its pure eyes,  
But hung a span's length from that  
ground pollute,  
At the opening of the cave.

And when he looked,  
The dragon cried, "Thou newly-  
fashioned thing,  
Of name unknown, thy scorn becomes  
thee not.  
Doth not thy Master suffer what thine  
eyes  
Thou countest all too clean to open  
on?"  
But still it hovered, and the quietness  
Of holy heaven was on the drooping  
lids;  
And not as one that answereth, it let  
fall  
The music from its mouth, but like to  
one  
That doth not hear, or, hearing, doth  
not heed.

"A message: 'I have heard thee,  
while remote  
I went My rounds among the unfinished  
stars.'  
A message: 'I have left thee to thy  
ways,  
And mastered all thy vileness, for thy  
hate  
I have made to serve the ends of My  
great love.  
Hereafter will I chain thee down. To-  
day  
One thing thou art forbidden; now  
thou knowest  
The name thereof: I told it thee in  
heaven,  
When thou wert sitting at My feet.  
Forbear  
To let that hidden thing be whispered  
forth:  
For man, ungrateful (and thy hope it  
was,  
That so ungrateful he might prove),  
would scorn,  
And not believe it, adding so fresh  
weight  
Of condemnation to the doomed world.

Concerning that, thou art forbid to  
 speak ;  
 Know thou didst count it, falling from  
 My tongue,  
 A lovely song, whose meaning was  
 unknown,  
 Unknowable, unbearable to thought,  
 But sweeter in the hearing than all  
 harps  
 Toned in My holy hollow. Now  
 thine ears  
 Are opened, know it, and discern and  
 fear,  
 Forbearing speech of it for evermore."

So said, it turned, and with a cry of  
 joy,  
 As one released, went up: and it was  
 dawn,  
 And all boughs dropped with dew, and  
 out of mist  
 Came the red sun and looked into the  
 cave.

But the dragon, left a-tremble, called  
 to him,  
 From the nether kingdom, certain of  
 his friends, —  
 Three whom he trusted, councillors  
 accursed.  
 A thunder-cloud stooped low and  
 swathed the place  
 In its black swirls, and out of it they  
 rushed,  
 And hid them in recesses of the cave,  
 Because they could not look upon the  
 sun,  
 Sith light is pure. And Satan called  
 to them, —  
 All in the dark, in his great rage he  
 spake:  
 "Up," quoth the dragon; "it is time  
 to work,  
 Or we are all undone." And he did  
 hiss,  
 And there came shudderings over land  
 and trees,  
 A dimness after dawn. The earth  
 threw out  
 A blinding fog, that crept toward the  
 cave,  
 And rolled up blank before it like a  
 veil, —

A curtain to conceal its habiter.  
 Then did those spirits move upon the  
 floor,  
 Like pillars of darkness, and with eyes  
 aglow.  
 One had a helm for covering of the  
 scars  
 'That seamed what rested of a goodly  
 face ;  
 He wore his vizor up, and all his words  
 Were hollower than an echo from the  
 hills:  
 He was hight Make. And lo, his fel-  
 low-fiend  
 Came after, holding down his dastard  
 head,  
 Like one ashamed: now this for craft  
 was great ;  
 The dragon honored him. A third sat  
 down  
 Among them, covering with his wasted  
 hand  
 Somewhat that pained his breast.

And when the fit  
 Of thunder, and the sobbings of the  
 wind,  
 Were lulled, the dragon spoke with  
 wrath and rage,  
 And told them of his matters: "Look  
 to this,  
 If ye be loyal ;" adding, "Give your  
 thoughts,  
 And let me have your counsel in this  
 need."

One spirit rose and spake, and all the  
 cave  
 Was full of sighs, "The words of  
 Make the Prince,  
 Of him once delegate in Betelgeux:  
 Whereas of late the manner is to  
 change,  
 We know not where 'twill end; and  
 now my words  
 Go thus: give way, be peaceable, lie  
 still  
 And strive not, else the world that we  
 have won  
 He may, to drive us out, reduce to  
 naught.

"For while I stood in mine obedience  
 yet,

Steering of Betelgeux my sun, behold,  
 A moon, that evil ones did fill, rolled  
 up  
 Astray, and suddenly the Master came,  
 And while, a million strong, like rooks  
 they rose,  
 He took and broke it, flung it here and  
 there,  
 And called a blast to drive the powder  
 forth;  
 And it was fine as dust, and blurred  
 the skies  
 Farther than 'tis from hence to this  
 young sun.  
 Spirits that passed upon their work that  
 day,  
 Cried out, "How dusty 'tis." Be-  
 hooves us, then,  
 That we depart, as leaving unto Him  
 This goodly world and goodly race of  
 man.  
 Not all are doomed: hereafter it may  
 be  
 That we find place on it again. But if,  
 Too zealous to preserve it, and the  
 men  
 Our servants, we oppose Him, He may  
 come,  
 And, choosing rather to undo His work  
 Than strive with it for aye, make so an  
 end."  
 He sighing paused. Lo, then the ser-  
 pent hissed  
 In impotent rage, "Depart! and how  
 depart!  
 Can flesh be carried down where spirits  
 wonn?  
 Or I, most miserable, hold my life  
 Over the airless, bottomless gulf, and  
 bide  
 The buffetings of yonder shoreless sea?  
 O death, thou terrible doom: O death,  
 thou dread  
 Of all that breathe."

A spirit rose and spake:  
 "Whereas in Heaven is power, is much  
 to fear;  
 For this admired country we have  
 marred.  
 Whereas in Heaven is love (and there  
 are days  
 When yet I can recall what love was  
 like),

Is naught to fear. A threatening makes  
 the whole,  
 And clogged with strong conditions:  
 'O, repent,  
 Man, and I turn.' He, therefore,  
 powerful now,  
 And more so, master, that ye bide in  
 clay,  
 Threateneth that He may save. They  
 shall not die."

The dragon said, "I tremble, I am  
 sick."  
 He said with pain of heart, "How am  
 I fallen!  
 For I keep silence; yea, I have with-  
 drawn  
 From haunting of His gates, and shout-  
 ing up  
 Defiance. Wherefore doth He hunt me  
 out  
 From this small world, this little one,  
 that I  
 Have been content to take unto myself,  
 I here being loved and worshippèd?  
 He knoweth  
 How much I have foregone; and must  
 He stoop  
 To whelm the worl'd, and heave the  
 floors o' the deep,  
 Of purpose to pursue me from my  
 place?  
 And since I gave men knowledge, must  
 He take  
 Their length of days whereby they per-  
 fect it?  
 So shall He scatter all that I have  
 stored,  
 And get them by degrading them. I  
 know  
 That in the end it is appointed me  
 To fade. I will not fade before the  
 time."

A spirit rose, the third, a spirit  
 ashamed  
 And subtle, and his face he turned  
 aside:  
 "Whereas," said he, "we strive  
 against both power  
 And love, behooves us that we strive  
 aright.  
 Now some of old my comrades yester-  
 day

I met, as they did journey to appear  
 In the Presence; and I said, 'My  
     master lieth  
 Sick yonder, otherwise (for no decree  
 There stands against it) he would also  
     come  
 And make obeisance with the sons of  
     God.'  
 They answered, naught denying.  
     Therefore, lord,  
 'T is certain that ye have admittance  
     yet;  
 And what doth hinder? Nothing but  
     this breath.  
 Were it not well to make an end, and  
     die,  
 And gain admittance to the King of  
     kings?  
 What if thy slaves by thy consent  
     should take  
 And bear thee on their wings above  
     the earth,  
 And suddenly let fall,—how soon  
     't were o'er!  
 We should have fear and sinking at the  
     heart;  
 But in a little moment we should see,  
 Rising majestic from a ruined heap,  
 The stately spirit that we served of  
     yore."

The serpent turned his subtle deadly  
     eyes  
 Upon the spirit, and hissed; and, sick  
     with shame,  
 It bowed itself together, and went back  
 With hidden face. "This counsel is  
     not good,"  
 The other twain made answer; "look,  
     my lord,  
 Whereas 'tis evil in thine eyes, in  
     ours  
 'Tis evil also; speak, for we perceive  
 That on thy tongue the words of coun-  
     sel sit,  
 Ready to fly to our right greedy ears,  
 That long for them." And Satan, flat-  
     tered thus  
 (For ever may the serpent kind be  
     charmed  
 With soft, sweet words, and music  
     deftly played),  
 Replied, "Whereas I surely rule the  
     world,

Behooves that ye prepare for me a  
     path,  
 And that I, putting of my pains  
     aside,  
 Go stir rebellion in the mighty hearts  
 O' the giants; for He loveth them, and  
     looks  
 Full oft complacent on their glorious  
     strength.  
 He willeth that they yield, that He  
     may spare;  
 But, by the blackness of my loathed  
     den,  
 I say they shall not, no, they shall not  
     yield;  
 Go, therefore, take to you some harm-  
     less guise,  
 And spread a rumor that I come. I,  
     sick,  
 Sorry, and aged, hasten. I have heard  
 Whispers that out of heaven dropped  
     unaware.  
 I caught them up, and sith they bode  
     men harm,  
 I am ready for to comfort them; yea,  
     more,  
 To counsel, and I will that they drive  
     forth  
 The women, the abhorred of my soul;  
 Let not a woman breathe where I shall  
     pass,  
 Lest the curse falleth, and she bruise  
     my head.  
 Friends, if it be their mind to send for  
     me  
 An army, and triumphant draw me on  
 In the golden car you wot of, and with  
     shouts,  
 I would not that ye hinder them. Ah,  
     then  
 Will I make hard their hearts, and  
     grieve Him sore  
 That loves them, O, by much too well  
     to wet  
 Their stately heads, and soil those  
     locks of strength  
 Under the fateful brine. Then after-  
     ward,  
 While He doth reason vainly with  
     them, I  
 Will offer Him a pact: 'Great King, a  
     pact,  
 And men shall worship Thee, I say  
     they shall,

For I will bid them do it, yea, and  
leave  
To sacrifice their kind, so Thou my  
name  
Wilt suffer to be worshipped after  
'Thine.'"

"Yea, my lord Satan," quoth they,  
"do this thing,  
And let us hear thy words, for they are  
sweet."

Then he made answer, "By a mes-  
senger

Have I this day been warned. There  
is a deed

I may not tell of, lest the people add  
Scorn of a Coming Greatness to their  
faults.

Why this? Who careth, when about  
to slay,

And slay indeed, how well they have  
deserved

Death whom he slayeth? Therefore  
yet is hid

A meaning of some mercy that will rob  
The nether world. Now look to it, —

'Twere vain,  
Albeit this deluge He would send in-  
deed,

That we expect the harvest; He  
would yet

Be the Master-reaper; for I heard it  
said,

Them that be young and know Him  
not, and them

That are bound and may not build, yea,  
more, their wives,

Whom, suffering not to hear the doom,  
they keep

Joyous behind the curtains, every one  
With maidens nourished in the house,  
and babes

And children at her knees — (then what  
remain!)

He claimeth and will gather for His  
own.

Now, therefore, it were good by guile  
to work,

Princes, and suffer not the doom to  
fall.

There is no evil like to love. I heard  
Him whisper it. Have I put on this  
flesh

To ruin His two children beautiful,  
And shall my deed confound me in the  
end,  
Through awful imitation? Love of  
God,  
I cry against thee; thou art worst of  
all."

## BOOK IV.

Now while these evil ones took coun-  
sel strange,

The son of Lamech journeyed home;  
and, lo!

A company came down, and struck the  
track

As he did enter it. There rode in  
front

Two horsemen, young and noble, and  
behind

Were following slaves with tent gear;  
others led

Strong horses, others bare the instru-  
ments

O' the chase, and in the rear dull  
camels lagged,

Sighing, for they were burdened, and  
they loved

The desert sands above that grassy  
vale.

And as they met, those horsemen drew  
the rein,

And fixed on him their grave un-  
troubled eyes;

He in his regal grandeur walked alone,  
And had nor steed nor follower, and  
his mien

Was grave and like to theirs. He  
said to them,

"Fair sirs, whose are ye?" They  
made answer cold,

"The beautiful woman, sir, our mother  
dear,

Niloiya, bare us to great Lamech's  
son."

And he, replying, "I am he." They  
said,

"We know it, sir. We have remem-  
bered you

Through many seasons. Pray you let  
us not;

We fain would greet our mother."  
And they made

Obeisance and passed on; then all  
 their train,  
 Which while they spoke had halted,  
 moved apace,  
 And, while the silent father stood,  
 went by,  
 He gazing after, as a man that dreams;  
 For he was sick with their cold, quiet  
 scorn,  
 That seemed to say, "Father, we own  
 you not,  
 We love you not, for you have left us  
 long, —  
 So long, we care not that you come  
 again."

And while the sullen camels moved, he  
 spake  
 To him that led the last, "There are  
 but two  
 Of these my sons; but where doth  
 Japhet ride?  
 For I would see him." And the leader  
 said,  
 "Sir, ye shall find him, if ye follow up  
 Along the track. Afore the noonday  
 meal  
 The young men, even our masters,  
 bathed; (there grows  
 A clump of cedars by the bend of yon  
 Clear river) — there did Japhet, after  
 meat,  
 Being right weary, lay him down and  
 sleep.  
 There, with a company of slaves and  
 some  
 Few camels, ye shall find him."

And the man,  
 The father of these three, did let him  
 pass,  
 And struggle and give battle to his  
 heart,  
 Standing as motionless as pillar set  
 To guide a wanderer in a pathless  
 waste;  
 But all his strength went from him, and  
 he strove  
 Vainly to trample out and trample  
 down  
 The misery of his love unsatisfied, —  
 Unutterable love flung in his face.

Then he broke out in passionate words,  
 that cried  
 Against his lot: "I have lost my own,  
 and won  
 None other; no, not one! Alas, my  
 sons!  
 That I have looked to for my solacing,  
 In the bitterness to come. My children  
 dear!"  
 And when from his own lips he heard  
 those words,  
 With passionate stirring of the heart,  
 he wept.

And none came near to comfort him.  
 His face  
 Was on the ground; but having wept,  
 he rose  
 Full hastily, and urged his way to find  
 The river; and in hollow of his hand  
 Raised up the water to his brow:  
 "This son,  
 This other son of mine," he said,  
 "shall see  
 No tears upon my face." And he  
 looked on,  
 Beheld the camels, and a group of slaves  
 Sitting apart from some one fast asleep,  
 Where they had spread out webs of  
 broidery work  
 Under a cedar-tree; and he came on,  
 And when they made obeisance he de-  
 clared [son  
 His name, and said, "I will beside my  
 Sit till he wakeneth." So Japhet lay  
 A-dreaming, and his father drew to  
 him.  
 He said, "This cannot scorn me yet;"  
 and paused,  
 Right angry with himself, because the  
 youth,  
 Albeit of stately growth, so languidly  
 Lay with a listless smile upon his  
 mouth,  
 That was full sweet and pure; and as  
 he looked,  
 He half forgot his trouble in his pride.  
 "And is this mine?" said he, "my  
 son! mine own!  
 (God, thou art good!) O, if this turn  
 away,  
 That pang shall be past bearing. I  
 must think

That all the sweetness of his goodly  
face  
Is copied from his soul. How beautiful  
Are children to their fathers! Son, my  
heart  
Is greatly glad because of thee; my  
life  
Shall lack of no completeness in the  
days  
To come If I forget the joy of youth,  
In thee shall I be comforted; ay, see  
My youth, a dearer than my own  
again."

And when he ceased, the youth, with  
sleep content,  
Murmured a little, turned himself, and  
woke.

He woke, and opened on his father's  
face  
The darkness of his eyes; but not a  
word  
The Master-shipwright said, — his lips  
were sealed;  
He was not ready, for he feared to see  
This mouth curl up with scorn. And  
Japhet spoke,  
Full of the calm that cometh after  
sleep:  
"Sir, I have dreamed of you. I pray  
you, sir,  
What is your name?" and even with  
his words  
His countenance changed. The son of  
Lamech said,  
"Why art thou sad? What have I  
done to thee?"  
And Japhet answered, "O, methought  
I fled  
In the wilderness before a maddened  
beast,  
And you came up and slew it; and  
I thought  
You were my father; but I fear me,  
sir,  
My thoughts were vain." With that  
his father said,  
"Whate'er of blessing Thou reserv'st  
for me,  
God! if Thou wilt not give to both,  
give here:

Bless him with both Thy hands;" and  
laid his own  
On Japhet's head.

Then Japhet looked on him,  
Made quiet by content, and answered  
low,  
With faltering laughter, glad and reverent:  
"Sir,  
You are my father?" "Ay," quoth  
he, "I am!  
Kiss me, my son; and let me hear my  
name,  
My much desired name, from your  
dear lips."

Then after, rested, they betook them  
home:  
And Japhet, walking by the Master,  
thought,  
"I did not will to love this sire of  
mine;  
But now I feel as if I had always known  
And loved him well; truly, I see not  
why,  
But I would rather serve him than go  
free  
With my two brethren." And he said  
to him,  
"Father!" — who answered, "I am  
here, my son."  
And Japhet said, "I pray you, sir, at-  
tend  
To this my answer: let me go with  
you,  
For, now I think on it, I do not love  
The chase, nor managing the steed,  
nor yet  
The arrows and the bow; but rather  
you,  
For all you do and say, and you your-  
self,  
Are goodly and delightsome in mine  
eyes.  
I pray you, sir, when you go forth  
again,  
That I may also go." And he replied,  
"I will tell thy speech unto the  
Highest; He  
Shall answer it. But I would speak to  
thee  
Now of the days to come. Know thou,  
most dear



To this thy father, that the drenched  
world,  
When risen clean washed from water,  
shall receive  
From thee her lordliest governors, from  
thee  
Daughters of noblest soul."

So Japhet said,  
"Sir, I am young, but of my mother  
straight  
I will go ask a wife, that this may be.  
I pray you, therefore, as the man-  
ner is  
Of fathers, give me land that I may  
reap  
Corn for sustaining of my wife, and  
bruise  
The fruit of the vine to cheer her."  
But he said,  
"Dost thou forget? or dost thou not  
believe,  
My son?" He answered, "I did ne'er  
believe,  
My father, ere to-day; but now, me-  
thinks,  
Whatever thou believest I believe,  
For thy beloved sake. If this then be  
As thou (I hear) hast said, and earth  
doth bear  
The last of her wheat harvests, and  
make ripe  
The latest of her grapes; yet hear me,  
sir,  
None of the daughters shall be given to  
me  
If I be landless." Then his father  
said,  
"Lift up thine eyes toward the north,  
my son!"  
And so he did. "Behold thy heri-  
tage!"  
Quoth the world's prince and master,  
"far away  
Upon the side o' the north, where  
green the field  
Lies every season through, and where  
the dews  
Of heaven are wholesome, shall thy  
children reign;  
I part it to them, for the earth is mine;  
The Highest gave it me: I make it  
theirs.  
Moreover, for thy marriage gift, behold

The cedars where thou sleepest!  
There are vines;  
And up the rise is growing wheat. I  
give  
(For all, alas! is mine), — I give thee  
both  
For dowry, and my blessing."

And he said,  
"Sir, you are good, and therefore the  
Most High  
Shall bless me also. Sir, I love you  
well."

## BOOK V.

AND when two days were over, Japhet  
said,  
"Mother, so please you, get a wife for  
me."  
The mother answered, "Dost thou  
mock me, son?  
'T is not the manner of our kin to wed  
So young. Thou knowest it; art thou  
not ashamed?  
Thou carest not for a wife." And the  
youth blushed,  
And made for answer: "This, my  
father, saith  
The doom is nigh; now, therefore, find  
a maid,  
Or else shall I be wifeless all my days.  
And as for me, I care not; but the  
lands  
Are parted, and the goodliest share is  
mine.  
And lo! my brethren are betrothed;  
their maids  
Are with thee in the house. Then why  
not mine?  
Didst thou not diligently search for  
these  
Among the noblest born of all the  
earth,  
And bring them up? My sisters, dwell  
they not  
With women that bespake them for  
their sons?  
Now, therefore, let a wife be found for  
me,  
Fair as the day, and gentle to my will  
As thou art to my father's." When  
she heard,

Niloiya sighed, and answered, "It is well."  
And Japhet went out from her presence.

Then  
Quoth the great Master: "Wherefore sought ye not,  
Woman, these many days, nor tired at all,  
Till ye had found, a maiden for my son?

In this ye have done ill." Niloiya said:

"Let not my lord be angry. All my soul

Is sad: my lord hath walked afar so long,

That some despise thee; yea, our servants fail

Lately to bring their stint of corn and wood.

And, sir, thy household slaves do steal away

To thy great father, and our lands lie waste, —

None till them: therefore think the women scorn

To give me — whatsoever gems I send,  
And goodly raiment (yea, I seek afar,

And sue with all desire and humbleness  
Through every master's house, but no one gives) —

A daughter for my son." With that she ceased.

Then said the Master: "Some thou hast with thee,  
Brought up among thy children, dutiful

And fair; thy father gave them for my slaves, —

Children of them whom he brought captive forth

From their own heritage." And she replied,

Right scornfully: "Shall Japhet wed a slave?"

Then said the Master: "He shall wed: look thou

To that. I say not he shall wed a slave;

But, by the might of One that made him mine,

I will not quit thee for my doomed way

Until thou wilt betroth him. Therefore, haste,

Beautiful woman, loved of me and mine,

To bring a maiden, and to say, 'Behold

A wife for Japhet.'" Then she answered, "Sir,

It shall be done."

And forth Niloiya sped.  
She gathered all her jewels, — all she held

Of costly or of rich, — and went and spake

With some few slaves that yet abode with her,

For daily they were fewer; and went forth,

With fair and flattering words, among her feres,

And fain had wrought with them: and she had hope

That made her sick, it was so faint; and then

She had fear, and after she had certainty,

For all did scorn her. "Nay," they cried, "O fool!

If this be so, and on a watery world  
Ye think to rock, what matters if a wife

Be free or bond? There shall be none to rule,

If she have freedom: if she have it not,  
None shall there be to serve."

And she alit,  
The time being done, desponding at her door,

And went behind a screen, where should have wrought

The daughters of the captives; but there wrought

One only, and this rose from off the floor,

Where she the river rush full deftly wove,

And made obeisance. Then Niloiya said,

"Where are thy fellows?" And the maid replied,

"Let not Niloiya, this my lady loved,  
Be angry; they are fled since yester-  
night."

Then said Niloiya, "Amarant, my  
slave,  
When have I called thee by thy name  
before?"

She answered, "Lady, never;" and  
she took  
And spread her broidered robe before  
her face.

Niloiya spoke thus: "I am come to  
woe,  
And thou to honor." Saying this, she  
wept

Passionate tears; and all the damsel's  
soul  
Was full of yearning wonder, and her  
robe

Slipped from her hand, and her right  
innocent face

Was seen betwixt her locks of tawny  
hair

That dropped about her knees, and her  
two eyes,

Blue as the much-loved flower that runs  
the beck,

Looked sweetly on Niloiya; but she  
knew

No meaning in her words; and she  
drew nigh,

And kneeled and said, "Will this my  
lady speak?"

Her damsel is desirous of her words."

Then said Niloiya, "I, thy mistress,  
sought

A wife for Japhet, and no wife is  
found."

And yet again she wept with grief of  
heart,

Saying, "Ah me, miserable! I must  
give

A wife,—the Master willeth it,—a  
wife,

Ah me! unto the high-born. He will  
scorn

His mother and reproach me. I must  
give —

None else have I to give—a slave—  
even thee."

This further spake Niloiya: "I was  
good,—

Had rue on thee, a tender sucking  
child,

When they did tear thee from thy  
mother's breast;

I fed thee, gave thee shelter, and I  
taught

Thy hands all cunning arts that women  
prize.

But out on me! my good is turned to  
ill.

O Japhet, well beloved!" And she  
rose up,

And did restrain herself, saying,  
"Dost thou heed?"

Behold, this thing shall be." The  
damsel sighed,

"Lady, I do." Then went Niloiya  
forth.

And Amarant murmured in her deep  
amaze,

"Shall Japhet's little children kiss my  
mouth?"

And will he sometimes take them from  
my arms,

And almost care for me for their sweet  
sake?

I have not dared to think I loved him,  
— now

I know it well: but O, the bitterness  
For him!" And ending thus, the

damsel rose,  
For Japhet entered. And she bowed  
herself

Meekly and made obeisance, but her  
blood

Ran cold about her heart, for all his  
face

Was colored with his passion.

Japhet spoke:  
He said "My father's slave;" and

she replied,  
Low drooping her fair head, "My

master's son."

And after that a silence fell on them,  
With trembling at her heart, and rage  
at his.

And Japhet, mastered of his passion,  
sat

And could not speak. O, cruel seemed  
his fate,—

So cruel he that told it, so unkind.  
His breast was full of wounded love  
and wrath

Wrestling together ; and his eyes flashed  
 out  
 Indignant lights, as all amazed he took  
 The insult home that she had offered  
 him,  
 Who should have held his honor dear.

And, lo,  
 The misery choked him, and he cried  
 in pain,  
 "Go, get thee forth ;" but she, all  
 white and still,  
 Parted her lips to speak, and yet spake  
 not,  
 Nor moved. And Japhet rose up  
 passionate,  
 With lifted arm as one about to strike ;  
 But she cried out and met him, and  
 she held  
 With desperate might his hand, and  
 prayed to him,  
 "Strike not, or else shall men from  
 henceforth say,  
 'Japhet is like to us.'" And he shook  
 off  
 The damsel, and he said, "I thank  
 thee, slave ;  
 For never have I stricken yet or child  
 Or woman. Not for thy sake am I  
 glad,  
 Nay, but for mine. Get hence. Obey  
 my words."  
 Then Japhet lifted up his voice, and  
 wept.

And no more he restrained himself,  
 but cried,  
 With heavings of the heart, "O hateful  
 day!  
 O day that shuts the door upon de-  
 light!  
 A slave! to wed a slave! O loathed  
 wife,  
 Hated of Japhet's soul." And after,  
 long,  
 With face between his hands, he sat,  
 his thoughts  
 Sullen and sore ; then scorned himself,  
 and saying,  
 "I will not take her, I will die unwed,  
 It is but that ;" lift up his eyes and  
 saw  
 The slave, and she was sitting at his  
 feet

And he, so greatly wondering that she  
 dared  
 The disobedience, looked her in the face  
 Less angry than afraid, for pale she  
 was  
 As lily yet unsmiled on by the sun ;  
 And he, his passion being spent, sighed  
 out,  
 "Low am I fallen indeed. Hast thou  
 no fear,  
 That thou dost flout me?" but she  
 gave to him  
 The sighing echo of his sigh, and  
 mourned,  
 "No."

And he wondered, and he looked  
 again,  
 For in her heart there was a new-born  
 pang,  
 That cried ; but she, as mothers with  
 their young,  
 Suffered, yet loved it ; and there shone  
 a strange  
 Grave sweetness in her blue unsullied  
 eyes.  
 And Japhet, leaning from the settle,  
 thought,  
 "What is it? I will call her by her  
 name,  
 To comfort her, for also she is naught  
 To blame ; and since I will not her to  
 wife,  
 She falls back from the freedom she  
 had hoped."  
 Then he said, "Amarant ;" and the  
 damsel drew  
 Her eyes down slowly from the shaded  
 sky  
 Of even, and she said, "My master's  
 son,  
 Japhet ;" and Japhet said, "I am not  
 wroth  
 With thee, but wretched for my mother's  
 deed,  
 Because she shamed me."

And the maiden said,  
 "Doth not thy father love thee well,  
 sweet sir?"  
 "Ay," quoth he, "well." She an-  
 swered, "Let the heart  
 Of Japhet, then, be merry. Go to  
 him

And say, 'The damsel whom my mother  
 chose  
 Sits by her in the house; but as for  
 me,  
 Sir, ere I take her, let me go with you  
 To that same outland country. Also,  
 sir,  
 My damsel hath not worked as yet the  
 robe  
 Of her betrothal;' now, then, sith he  
 loves,  
 He will not say thee nay. Herein for  
 a while  
 Is respite, and thy mother far and near  
 Will seek again: it may be she will find  
 A fair, free maiden."

Japhet said, "O maid,  
 Sweet are thy words; but what if I  
 return,  
 And all again be as it is to-day?"  
 Then Amarant answered, "Some have  
 died in youth;  
 But yet, I think not, sir, that I shall  
 die.  
 Though ye shall find it even as I had  
 died, —  
 Silent, for any words I might have  
 said;  
 Empty, for any space I might have  
 filled.  
 Sir, I will steal away, and hide afar;  
 But if a wife be found, then will I bide  
 And serve." He answered, "O, thy  
 speech is good;  
 Now, therefore (since my mother gave  
 me thee),  
 I will reward it; I will find for thee  
 A goodly husband, and will make him  
 free  
 Thee also."

Then she started from his feet,  
 And, red with shame and anger, flashed  
 on him  
 The passion of her eyes; and put her  
 hands  
 With catching of the breath to her fair  
 throat,  
 And stood in her defiance lost to fear,  
 Like some fair hind in desperate danger  
 turned  
 And brought to bay, and wild in her  
 despair.

But shortly, "I remember," quoth she,  
 low,  
 With raining down of tears and broken  
 sighs,  
 "That I am Japhet's slave; beseech  
 you, sir,  
 As ye were ever gentle, ay, and sweet  
 Of language to me, be not harder now.  
 Sir, I was yours to take; I knew not,  
 sir,  
 That also ye might give me. Pray you,  
 sir,  
 Be pitiful, — be merciful to me,  
 A slave." He said, "I thought to do  
 thee good,  
 For good hath been thy counsel;"  
 but she cried,  
 "Good master, be you therefore pitiful  
 To me, a slave." And Japhet won-  
 dered much  
 At her, and at her beauty, for he  
 thought,  
 "None of the daughters are so fair as  
 this,  
 Nor stand with such a grace majesti-  
 cal;  
 She in her locks is like the travelling  
 sun,  
 Setting, all clad in coifing clouds of  
 gold.  
 And would she die unmatched?" He  
 said to her,  
 "What! wilt thou sail alone in yonder  
 ship,  
 And dwell alone hereafter?" "Ay,"  
 she said,  
 "And serve my mistress."

"It is well," quoth he,  
 And held his hand to her, as is the  
 way  
 Of masters. Then she kissed it, and  
 she said,  
 "Thanks for benevolence," and turned  
 herself,  
 Adding, "I rest, sir, on your gracious  
 words;"  
 Then stepped into the twilight and was  
 gone.

And Japhet, having found his father,  
 said,  
 "Sir, let me also journey when ye go."

Who answered, "Hath thy mother  
done her part?"

He said, "Yea, truly, and my damsel  
sits

Before her in the house; and also, sir,  
She said to me, 'I have not worked, as  
yet,

The garment of betrothal.'" And he  
said,

"'Tis not the manner of our kin to  
speak

Concerning matters that a woman rules;  
But hath thy mother brought a damsel  
home,

And let her see thy face, then all is one  
As ye were wed.'" He answered,

"Even so,

It matters nothing; therefore hear me,  
sir:

The damsel being mine, I am content  
To let her do according to her will;

And when we shall return, so surely,  
sir,

As I shall find her by my mother's  
side,

Then will I take her;" and he left to  
speak;

His father answering, "Son, thy words  
are good."

#### BOOK VI.

NIGHT. Now a tent was pitched, and  
Japhet sat

In the door and watched, for on a litter  
lay

The father of his love. And he was  
sick

To death; but daily he would rouse  
him up,

And stare upon the light, and ever say,  
"On, let us journey;" but it came to

pass  
That night, across their path a river  
ran,

And they who served the father and  
the son

Had pitched the tents beside it, and  
had made

A fire, to scare away the savagery  
That roamed in that great forest, for

their way  
Had led among the trees of God.

The moon  
Shone on the river, like a silver road  
To lead them over; but when Japhet  
looked,

He said, "We shall not cross it. I  
shall lay

This well-beloved head low in the  
leaves, —

Not on the farther side." From time  
to time,

The water-snakes would stir its glassy  
flow

With curling undulations, and would  
lay

Their heads along the banks, and, sub-  
tle-eyed,

Consider those long spiriting flames,  
that danced,

When some red log would break and  
crumble down,

And show his dark despondent eyes,  
that watched,

Wearily, even Japhet's. But he cared  
Little; and in the dark, that was not

dark,

But dimness of confused incertitude,  
Would move a-near all silently, and  
gaze

And breathe, and shape itself, a manèd  
thing

With eyes; and still he cared not, and  
the form

Would falter, then recede, and melt  
again

Into the farther shade. And Japhet  
said:

"How long? The moon hath grown  
again in heaven,

After her caving twice, since we did  
leave

The threshold of our home; and now  
what 'vails

That far on tumbled mountain snow we  
toiled,

Hungry, and weary, all the day; by  
night

Waked with a dreadful trembling un-  
derneath,

To look, while every cone smoked, and  
there ran

Red brooks adown, that licked the  
forest up,

While in the pale white ashes wading  
on

We saw no stars? — what 'vails if after-  
ward,  
Astonished with great silence, we did  
move  
Over the measureless, unknown desert  
mead;  
While all the day, in rents and crevices,  
Would lie the lizard and the serpent  
kind,  
Drowsy; and in the night take fear-  
some shapes,  
And oft-times woman-faced and wom-  
an-haired  
Would trail their snaky length, and  
curse and mourn;  
Or there would wander up, when we  
were tired,  
Dark troops of evil ones, with eyes  
morose,  
Withstanding us, and staring; — O,  
what 'vails  
That in the dread deep forest we have  
fought  
With following packs of wolves?  
These men of might,  
Even the giants, shall not hear the  
doom  
My father came to tell them of. Ah  
me!  
If God indeed had sent him, would he  
lie  
(For he is stricken with a sore disease)  
Helpless outside their city?"

Then he rose,  
And put aside the curtains of the tent,  
To look upon his father's face; and lo!  
The tent being dark, he thought that  
somewhat sat  
Beside the litter; and he set his eyes  
To see it, and saw not; but only  
marked  
Where, fallen away from manhood and  
from power,  
His father lay. Then he came forth  
again,  
Trembling, and crouched beside the  
dull red fire,  
And murmured, "Now it is the second  
time:  
An old man, as I think (but scarcely  
saw),  
Dreadful of might. Its hair was white  
as wool:

I dared not look; perhaps I saw not  
aught,  
But only knew that it was there: the  
same  
Which walked beside us once when he  
did pray,"  
And Japhet hid his face between his  
hands  
For fear, and grief of heart, and wear-  
iness  
Of watching; and he slumbered not,  
but mourned  
To himself, a little moment, as it  
seemed,  
For sake of his loved father; then he  
lift  
His eyes, and day had dawned. Right  
suddenly  
The moon withheld her silver, and she  
hung  
Frail as a cloud. The ruddy flame  
that played  
By night on dim, dusk trees, and on the  
flood,  
Crept red amongst the logs, and all the  
world  
And all the water blushed and bloomed.  
The stars  
Were gone, and golden shafts came up,  
and touched  
The feathered heads of palms, and  
green was born  
Under the rosy cloud, and purples flew  
Like veils across the mountains; and  
he saw,  
Winding athwart them, bathed in bliss-  
ful peace,  
And the sacredness of morn, the battle-  
ments  
And outposts of the giants; and there  
ran  
On the other side the river, as it were,  
White mounds of marble, tabernacles  
fair,  
And towers below a line of inland cliff:  
These were their fastnesses, and here  
their homes.

In valleys and the forest, all that  
night,  
There had been woe; in every hollow  
place,  
And under walls, like drifted flowers,  
or snow,

Women lay mourning ; for the serpent  
lodged  
That night within the gates, and had  
decreed,  
"I will (or ever I come) that ye drive  
out  
The women, the abhorred of my soul."

Therefore, more beauteous than all  
climbing bloom,  
Purple and scarlet, cumbering of the  
boughs,  
Or flights of azure doves that lit to  
drink  
The water of the river ; or, new born,  
The quivering butterflies in companies,  
That slowly crept adown the sandy  
marge,  
Like living crocus beds, and also drank,  
And rose an orange cloud ; their hol-  
lowed hands  
They dipped between the lilies, or with  
robes  
Full of ripe fruitage, sat and peeled  
and ate,  
Weeping ; or comforting their little  
ones,  
And lulling them with sorrowful long  
hymns  
Among the palms.

So went the earlier morn.  
Then came a messenger, while Japhet  
sat  
Mournfully, and he said, "The men of  
might  
Are willing ; let thy master, youth,  
appear."  
And Japhet said, "So be it ;" and he  
thought,  
"Now will I trust in God ;" and he  
went in  
And stood before his father, and he  
said,  
"My father ;" but the Master an-  
swered not,  
But gazed upon the curtains of his tent,  
Nor knew that one had called him.  
He was clad  
As ready for the journey, and his feet  
Were sandalled, and his staff was at his  
side ;  
And Japhet took the gown of sacrifice

And spread it on him, and he laid his  
crown  
Upon his knees, and he went forth,  
and lift  
His hand to heaven, and cried, "My  
father's God !"  
But neither whisper came nor echo fell  
When he did listen. Therefore he  
went on :  
"Behold, I have a thing to say to thee.  
My father charged thy servant, 'Let  
not ruth  
Prevail with thee to turn and bear me  
hence,  
For God appointed me my task, to  
preach  
Before the mighty.' I must do my  
part  
(O, let it not displease thee), for he  
said  
But yesternight, 'When they shall send  
for me,  
Take me before them.' And I sware  
to him.  
I pray thee, therefore, count his life  
and mine  
Precious ; for I that sware, I will per-  
form."

Then cried he to his people, "Let us  
hence :  
Take up the litter." And they set  
their feet  
Toward the raft whereby men crossed  
that flood.

And while they journeyed, lo, the  
giants sat  
Within the fairest hall where all were  
fair,  
Each on his carven throne, o'er-canop-  
ied  
With work of women. And the dragon  
lay  
In a place of honor ; and with subtlety  
He counselled them, for they did speak  
by turns ;  
And they, being proud, might nothing  
master them,  
But guile alone : and he did fawn on  
them ;  
And when the younger taunted him,  
submiss



He testified great humbleness, and  
cried,  
"A cruel God, forsooth! but nay, O  
nay,  
I will not think it of Him, that He  
meant  
To threaten these. O, when I look on  
them,  
How doth my soul admire."

And one stood forth,  
The youngest; of his brethren named  
"the Rock."  
"Speak out," quoth he, "thou tooth-  
less, slavering thing,  
What is it? thinkest thou that such as  
we  
Should be afraid? What is this goodly  
doom?"  
And Satan laughed upon him "Lo,"  
said he,  
"Thou art not fully grown, and every  
one  
I look on standeth higher by the head,  
Yea, and the shoulders, than do other  
men;  
Forsooth, thy servant thought not  
thou wouldst fear,  
Thou and thy fellows." Then with  
one accord,  
"Speak," cried they; and with mild,  
persuasive eyes,  
And flattering tongue, he spoke.

"Ye mighty ones,  
It hath been known to you these many  
days  
How that for piety I am much famed.  
I am exceeding pious: if I lie,  
As hath been whispered, it is but for  
sake  
Of God, and that ye should not think  
Him hard,  
For I am all for God. Now some have  
thought  
That He hath also (and it may be so  
Or yet may not be so) on me been  
hard;  
Be not ye therefore wroth, for my poor  
sake;  
I am contented to have earned your  
weal,  
Though I must therefore suffer.

"Now to-day  
One cometh, yea, an harmless man, a  
fool,  
Who boasts he hath a message from  
our God,  
And lest that you, for bravery of heart  
And stoutness, being angered with his  
prate,  
Should lift a hand, and kill him, I am  
here."

Then spoke the Leader, "How now,  
snake? Thy words  
Ring false. Why ever liest thou, snake,  
to us?  
Thou coward! none of us will see thee  
harm'd.  
I say thou liest. The land is strewed  
with slain;  
Myself have hewn down companies,  
and blood  
Makes fertile all the field. Thou  
knowest it well;  
And hast thou, driveller, panting sore  
for age,  
Come with a force to bid us spare one  
fool?"

And Satan answered, "Nay you! be  
not wroth;  
Yet true it is, and yet not all the truth.  
Your servant would have told the rest,  
if now  
(For fulness of your life being fretted  
sore  
At mine infirmities, which God in vain  
I supplicate to heal) ye had not caused  
My speech to stop." And he they  
called "the Oak"  
Made answer, "'Tis a good snake; let  
him be.  
Why would ye fright the poor old  
craven beast?  
Look how his lolling tongue doth foam  
for fear.  
Ye should have mercy, brethren, on  
the weak.  
Speak, dragon, thou hast leave; make  
stout thy heart.  
What! hast thou lied to this great com-  
pany?  
It was, we know it was, for humbleness;  
Thou wert not willing to offend with  
truth."

"Yea, majesties," quoth Satan, "thus  
it was,"  
And lifted up appealing eyes, and  
groaned ;  
"O, can it be, compassionate as brave,  
And housed in cunning works them-  
selves have reared,  
And served in gold, and warmed with  
minivere,  
And ruling nobly, that He, not con-  
tent  
Unless alone He reigneth, looks to  
bend  
Or break them in, like slaves to cry to  
Him,  
'What is Thy will with us, O Master  
dear?'  
Or else to eat of death?

"For my part, lords,  
I cannot think it: for my piety  
And reason, which I also share with  
you,  
Are my best lights, and ever counsel  
me,  
'Believe not aught against thy God ;  
believe,  
Since thou canst never reach to do Him  
wrong,  
That He will never stoop to do thee  
wrong.  
Is He not just and equal, yea, and  
kind?'  
Therefore, O majesties, it is my mind,  
Concerning him ye wot of, thus to  
think  
The message is not like what I have  
learned,  
By reason and experience, of the God.  
Therefore no message 'tis. The man  
is mad."  
Thereat the Leader laughed for scorn.  
"Hold, snake ;  
If God be just, there SHALL be reckon-  
ing days.  
We rather would He were a partial  
God,  
And, being strong, He sided with the  
strong.  
Turn now thy reason to the other  
side,  
And speak for that ; for as to justice,  
snake,  
We would have none of it."

And Satan fawned :  
"My lord is pleased to mock at my  
poor wit ;  
Yet in my pious fashion I must talk :  
For say that God was wroth with man,  
and came  
And slew him, that should make an  
empty world,  
But not a better nation."

This replied,  
"Truth, dragon, yet He is not bound  
to mean  
A better nation ; maybe, He designs,  
If none will turn again, a punishment  
Upon an evil one."

And Satan cried,  
"Alas ! my heart being full of love for  
men,  
I cannot choose but think of God as like  
To me ; and yet my piety concludes,  
Since He will have your fear, that love  
alone  
Sufficeth not, and I admire, and say,  
'Give me, O friends, your love, and  
give to  
Your fear'" But they cried out in  
wrath and rage,  
"We are not strong that any we will  
fear,  
Nor specially a foe that means us ill."

#### BOOK VII.

AND while he spoke there was a noise  
without ;  
The curtains of the door were flung  
aside,  
And some with heavy feet bare in, and  
set  
A litter on the floor.

The Master lay  
Upon it, but his eyes were dimmed and  
set ;  
And Japhet, in despairing weariness,  
Leaned it beside. He marked the  
mighty ones,  
Silent for pride of heart, and in his  
place  
The jewelled dragon ; and the dragon  
laughed,  
And subtly peered at him, till Japhet  
shook

With rage and fear. The snaky wonder  
cried,  
Hissing, "Thou brown-haired youth,  
come up to me;  
I fain would have thee for my shrine  
afar,  
To serve among an host as beautiful  
As thou: draw near." It hissed, and  
Japhet felt  
Horrible drawings, and cried out in  
fear,  
"Father! O help, the serpent draweth  
me!"  
And struggled and grew faint, as in the  
toils  
A netted bird. But still his father  
lay  
Unconscious, and the mighty did not  
speak,  
But half in fear and half for wonder-  
ment  
Beheld. And yet again the dragon  
laughed,  
And leered at him and hissed; and  
Japhet strove  
Vainly to take away his spell-set  
eyes,  
And moved to go to him, till pierc-  
ingly  
Crying out, "God! forbid it, God in  
heaven!"  
The dragon lowered his head, and shut  
his eyes  
As feigning sleep; and, suddenly re-  
leased,  
He fell back staggering; and at noise  
of it,  
And clash of Japhet's weapons on the  
floor,  
And Japhet's voice crying out, "I  
loathe thee, snake!  
I hate thee! O, I hate thee!" came  
again  
The senses of the shipwright; and he,  
moved,  
And looking, as one'mazed, distress-  
fully  
Upon the mighty, said, "One called  
on God:  
Where is my God? If God have need  
of me,  
Let Him come down and touch my  
lips with strength,  
Or dying I shall die."

It came to pass,  
While he was speaking, that the cur-  
tains swayed;  
A rushing wind did move throughout  
the place,  
And all the pillars shook, and on the  
head  
Of Noah the hair was lifted, and there  
played  
A somewhat as it were a light, upon  
His breast; then fell a darkness, and  
men heard  
A whisper as of one that spake. With  
that,  
The daunted mighty ones kept silent  
watch  
Until the wind had ceased and dark-  
ness fled.  
When it grew light, there curled a cloud  
of smoke  
From many censers where the dragon  
lay.  
It hid him. He had called his minis-  
trants,  
And bid them veil him thus, that none  
might look;  
Also the folk who came with Noah had  
fled.

But Noah was seen, for he stood up  
erect,  
And leaned on Japhet's hand. Then,  
after pause,  
The Leader said, "My brethren, it  
were well  
(For naught we fear) to let this sorcerer  
speak."  
And they did reach toward the man  
their staves,  
And cry with loud accord, "Hail,  
sorcerer, hail!"

And he made answer, "Hail! I am a  
man  
That is a shipwright. I was born afar  
To Lamech, him that reigns a king, to  
wit,  
Over the land of Jalal. Majesties,  
I bring a message, — lay you it to  
heart;  
For there is wrath in heaven: my God  
is wroth.  
'Prepare your houses, or I come,' saith  
He,

'A Judge,' Now, therefore, say not in  
 your hearts,  
 'What have we done?' Your dogs  
 may answer that,  
 To make whom fiercer for the chase ye  
 feed  
 With captives whom ye slew not in the  
 war,  
 But saved alive, and living throw to  
 them  
 Daily. Your wives may answer that,  
 whose babes  
 Their firstborn ye do take and offer up  
 To this abhorred snake, while yet the  
 milk  
 Is in their innocent mouths, — your  
 maiden babes  
 Tender. Your slaves may answer that,  
 — the gangs  
 Whose eyes ye did put out to make  
 them work  
 By night unwitting (yea, by multitudes  
 They work upon the wheel in chains).  
 Your friends  
 May answer that, — (their bleached  
 bones cry out), —  
 For ye did, wickedly, to eat their lands,  
 Turn on their valleys, in a time of  
 peace,  
 The rivers, and they, choking in the  
 night,  
 Died unavenged. But rather (for I  
 leave  
 To tell of more, the time would be so  
 long  
 To do it, and your time, O mighty ones,  
 Is short), — but rather say, 'We sin-  
 ners know  
 Why the Judge standeth at the door,'  
 and turn  
 While yet there may be respite, and  
 repent.  
 "Or else," saith He that formed you,  
 'I swear,  
 By all the silence of the time to come,  
 By the solemnities of death, — yea,  
 more,  
 By Mine own power and love which ye  
 have scorned, —  
 That I will come. I will command the  
 clouds,  
 And raining they shall rain; yea, I will  
 stir

With all my storms the ocean for your  
 sake,  
 And break for you the boundary of the  
 deep.

"Then shall the mighty mourn.

"Should I forbear,  
 That have been patient? I will not  
 forbear!  
 For yet,' saith He, 'the weak cry out;  
 for yet  
 The little ones do languish; and the  
 slave  
 Lifts up to Me his chain. I, there-  
 fore, I  
 Will hear them. I by death will scat-  
 ter you;  
 Yea, and by death will draw them to  
 My breast,  
 And gather them to peace.

"But yet,' saith He,  
 'Repent, and turn you. Wherefore  
 will ye die?'

"Turn then, O turn, while yet the  
 enemy  
 Untamed of man fatefully moans afar;  
 For if ye will not turn, the doom is  
 near.  
 Then shall the crested wave make  
 sport, and beat  
 You mighty at your doors. Will ye be  
 wroth?  
 Will ye forbid it? Monsters of the  
 deep  
 Shall suckle in your palaces their young,  
 And swim atween your hangings, all of  
 them  
 Costly with brodered work, and rare  
 with gold  
 And white and scarlet (there did ye op-  
 press, —  
 There did ye make you vile); but ye  
 shall lie  
 Meekly, and storm and wind shall rage  
 above,  
 And urge the weltering wave.

"Yet,' saith thy God,  
 'Son,' ay, to each of you He saith, 'O  
 son,

Made in My image, beautiful and strong,  
 Why wilt thou die? Thy Father loves thee well.  
 Repent and turn thee from thine evil ways,  
 O son! and no more dare the wrath of love.  
 Live for thy Father's sake that formed thee.  
 Why wilt thou die?' Here will I make an end."

Now ever on his daïs the dragon lay,  
 Feigning to sleep; and all the mighty ones  
 Were wroth, and chided, some against the woe,  
 And some at whom the sorcerer they had named, —  
 Some at their fellows, for the younger sort —  
 As men the less acquaint with deeds of blood,  
 And given to learning and the arts of peace  
 (Their fathers having crushed rebellion out  
 Before their time) — lent favorable ears.  
 They said, "A man, or false or fanatic,  
 May claim good audience if he fill our ears  
 With what is strange: and we would hear again."

The Leader said, "An audience hath been given.  
 The man hath spoken, and his words are naught;  
 A feeble threatener, with a foolish threat,  
 And it is not our manner that we sit  
 Beyond the noonday;" then they grandly rose,  
 A stalwart crowd, and with their Leader moved  
 To the tones of harping, and the beat of shawms,  
 And the noise of pipes, away. But some were left  
 About the Master; and the feigning snake  
 Couched on his daïs.

Then one to Japhet said, —  
 One called "the Cedar Tree," —  
 "Dost thou, too, think  
 To reign upon our lands when we lie drowned?"  
 And Japhet said, "I think not, nor desire,  
 Nor in my heart consent, but that ye swear  
 Allegiance to the God, and live." He  
 To one surnamed "the Pine," —  
 "Brother, behooves  
 That deep we cut our names in yonder crag,  
 Else when this youth returns, his sons may ask  
 Our names, and he may answer, 'Matters not,  
 For my part I forget them.'"

Japhet said,  
 "They might do worse than that, they might deny  
 That such as you have ever been."  
 With that  
 They answered, "No, thou dost not think it, no!"  
 And Japhet, being chafed, replied in heat,  
 "And wherefore? if ye say of what is sworn,  
 'He will not do it,' shall it be more [hard  
 For future men, if any talk on it,  
 To say, 'He did not do it?'" They replied,  
 With laughter, "Lo you! he is stout with us.  
 And yet he cowered before the poor old snake.  
 Sirrah, when you are saved, we pray you now  
 To bear our might in mind, — do, sirrah, do;  
 And likewise tell your sons, "'The Cedar Tree,"  
 Was a good giant, for he struck me not,  
 Though he was young and full of sport, and though  
 I taunted him.'"

With that they also passed.  
 But there remained who with the shipwright spoke:

"How wilt thou certify to us thy truth?"

And he related to them all his ways  
From the beginning: of the Voice that  
called;

Moreover, how the ship of doom was  
built.

And one made answer, "Shall the  
mighty God

Talk with a man of wooden beams and  
bars?

No, thou mad preacher, no. If He,  
Eterne,

Be ordering of His far infinitudes,  
And darkness cloud a world, it is but  
chance,

As if the shadow of His hand had  
fallen

On one that He forgot, and troubled  
it."

Then said the Master, "Yet,—who  
told thee so?"

And from his daïs the feigning serpent  
hissed:

"Preacher, the light within, it was  
that shined,

And told him so. The pious will have  
dread

Him to declare such as ye rashly told.  
The course of God is one. It likes not  
us

To think of Him as being acquaint  
with change:

It were beneath Him. Nay, the  
finished earth

Is left to her great masters. They  
must rule;

They do; and I have set myself be-  
tween,—

A visible thing for worship, sith His  
face

(For He is hard) He showeth not to  
men.

Yea, I have set myself 'twixt God and  
man,

To be interpreter, and teach mankind  
A pious lesson by my piety.

He loveth not, nor hateth, nor desires,—  
It were beneath Him."

And the Master said,  
"Thou liest. Thou wouldst lie away  
the world,

If He whom thou hast dared to speak  
against

Would suffer it." "I may not chide  
with thee,"

It answered, "Now; but if there come  
such time

As thou hast prophesied, as I now  
reign

In all men's sight, shall my dominion  
then

Reach to be mighty in their souls.  
Thou too

Shalt feel it, prophet." And he  
lowered his head.

Then quoth the Leader of the young  
men: "Sir,

We scorn you not; speak further; yet  
our thought

First answer. Not but by a miracle  
Can this thing be. The fashion of the  
world

We heretofore have never known to  
change;

And will God change it now?"

He then replied:  
"What is thy thought? THERE IS NO  
MIRACLE?

There is a great one, which thou hast  
not read,

And never shalt escape. Thyself, O  
man,

Thou art the miracle. Lo, if thou  
sayest,

'I am one, and fashioned like the  
gracious world,

Red clay is all my make, myself, my  
whole,

And not my habitation,' then thy sleep  
Shall give thee wings to play among the  
rays

O' the morning. If thy thought be, 'I  
am one,—

A spirit among spirits,—and the world  
A dream my spirit dreameth of, my  
dream

Being all,' the dominating mountains  
strong

Shall not for that forbear to take thy  
 breath,  
 And rage with all their winds, and beat  
 thee back,  
 And beat thee down when thou wouldst  
 set thy feet  
 Upon their awful crests. Ay, thou  
 thyself,  
 Being in the world and of the world,  
 thyself,  
 Hast breathed in breath from Him  
 that made the world.  
 Thou dost inherit, as thy Maker's son,  
 That which He is, and that which He  
 hath made:  
 Thou art thy Father's copy of Him-  
 self, —  
 THOU art thy FATHER'S MIRACLE.

“Behold,  
 He buildeth up the stars in companies;  
 He made for them a law. To man He  
 said,  
 ‘Freely I give thee freedom.’ What  
 remains?  
 O, it remains, if thou, the image of  
 God,  
 Wilt reason well, that thou shalt know  
 His ways;  
 But first thou must be loyal, — love, O  
 man,  
 Thy Father, — hearken when He  
 pleads with thee,  
 For there is something left of Him  
 e'en now, —  
 A witness for thy Father in thy soul,  
 Albeit thy better state thou hast fore-  
 gone.

“Now, then, be still, and think not in  
 thy soul,  
 ‘The rivers in their course forever run,  
 And turn not from it. He is like to  
 them  
 Who made them.’ Think the rather,  
 ‘With my foot  
 I have turned the rivers from their  
 ancient way  
 To water grasses that were fading.  
 What!  
 Is God my Father as the river wave,  
 That yet descendeth, — like the lesser  
 thing

He made, and not like me, a living son,  
 That changed the watercourse to suit  
 his will?’

“Man is the miracle in nature. God  
 Is the ONE MIRACLE to man. Be-  
 hold,  
 ‘There is a God,’ thou sayest. Thou  
 sayest well:  
 In that thou sayest all. To Be is more  
 Of wonderful than, being, to have  
 wrought,  
 Or reigned, or rested.

“Hold then there, content;  
 Learn that to love is the one way to  
 know  
 Or God or man: it is not love received  
 That maketh man to know the inner  
 life  
 Of them that love him; his own love  
 bestowed  
 Shall do it. Love thy Father, and no  
 more  
 His doings shall be strange. Thou  
 shalt not fret  
 At any counsel, then, that He will  
 send, —  
 No, nor rebel, albeit He have with thee  
 Great reservations. Know, to Be is  
 more  
 Than to have acted; yea, or, after rest  
 And patience, to have risen and been  
 wroth,  
 Broken the sequence of an ordered  
 earth,  
 And troubled nations.”

Then the dragon sighed.  
 “Poor fanatic,” quoth he, “thou  
 speakest well.  
 Would I were like thee, for thy faith is  
 strong,  
 Albeit thy senses wander. Yea, good  
 sooth,  
 My masters, let us not despise, but  
 learn  
 Fresh loyalty from this poor loyal soul.  
 Let us go forth — (myself will also go  
 To head you) — and do sacrifice; for  
 that,  
 We know, is pleasing to the mighty  
 God:

But as for building many arks of wood,  
O majesties! when He shall counsel  
you  
HIMSELF, then build. What say you,  
shall it be  
An hundred oxen, — fat, well liking,  
white?  
An hundred? why, a thousand were  
not much  
To such as you." Then Noah lift up  
his arms  
To heaven, and cried, "Thou aged  
shape of sin,  
The Lord rebuke thee."

## BOOK VIII.

THEN one ran, crying, while Niloiya  
wrought,  
"The Master cometh!" and she went  
within  
To adorn herself for meeting him.  
And Shem  
Went forth and talked with Japhet in  
the field,  
And said, "Is it well, my brother?"  
He replied,  
"Well! and, I pray you, is it well at  
home?"

But Shem made answer, "Can a  
house be well,  
If he that should command it bides  
afar?  
Yet well is thee, because a fair free  
maid  
Is found to wed thee; and they bring  
her in  
This day at sundown. Therefore is  
much haste  
To cover thick with costly webs the  
floor,  
And pluck and cover thick the same  
with leaves  
Of all sweet herbs, — I warrant, ye  
shall hear  
No footfall where she treadeth; and  
the seats  
Are ready, spread with robes; the  
tables set  
With golden baskets, red pomegran-  
ates shred

To fill them; and the rubied censers  
smoke,  
Heaped up with ambergris and cinna-  
mon,  
And frankincense and cedar."

Japhet said,  
"I will betroth her to me straight;"  
and went  
(Yet labored he with sore disquietude)  
To gather grapes, and reap and bind  
the sheaf  
For his betrothal. And his brother  
spake,  
"Where is our father? doth he preach  
to-day?"  
And Japhet answered, "Yea. He  
said to me,  
'Go forward; I will follow when the  
folk  
By yonder mountain-hold I shall have  
warned.'"

And Shem replied, "How thinkest  
thou? — thine ears  
Have heard him oft." He answered,  
"I do think  
These be the last days of this old fair  
world."

Then he did tell him of the giant folk:  
How they, than he, were taller by the  
head;  
How one must stride that will ascend  
the steps  
That lead to their wide halls; and how  
they drive,  
With manifold shouts, the mammoth to  
the north;  
And how the talking dragon lied and  
fawned,  
They seated proudly on their ivory  
thrones,  
And scorning him: and of their peaked  
hoods,  
And garments wrought upon, each with  
the tale  
Of him that wore it, — all his manifold  
deeds  
(Yea, and about their skirts were effigies  
Of kings that they had slain; and some,  
whose swords  
Many had pierced, wore vestures all of  
red,



To signify much blood): and of their  
 pride  
 He told, but of the vision in the tent  
 He told him not.

And when they reached the house,  
 Niloiya met them, and to Japhet cried,  
 "All hail, right fortunate! Lo, I have  
 found

A maid. And now thou hast done  
 well to reap

The late ripe corn." So he went in  
 with her,

And she did talk with him right moth-  
 erly :

"It hath been fully told me how ye  
 loathed

To wed thy father's slave; yea, she  
 herself,

Did she not all declare to me?"

He said,  
 "Yet is thy damsel fair, and wise of  
 heart."

"Yea," quoth his mother; "she made  
 clear to me

How ye did weep, my son, and ye did  
 vow,

"I will not take her!" Now, it was  
 not I

That wrought to have it so." And he  
 replied,

"I know it." Quoth the mother, "It  
 is well;

For that same cause is laughter in my  
 heart."

"But she is sweet of language," Ja-  
 phet said.

"Ay," quoth Niloiya, "and thy wife  
 no less

Whom thou shalt wed anon,—forsooth,  
 anon,—

It is a lucky hour. Thou wilt?" He  
 said,

"I will." And Japhet laid the slender  
 sheaf

From off his shoulder, and he said,  
 "Behold,

My father!" Then Niloiya turned  
 herself,

And lo! the shipwright stood. "All  
 hail!" quoth she,

And bowed herself, and kissed him on  
 the mouth;

But while she spake with him, sorely  
 he sighed;

And she did hang about his neck the  
 robe

Of feasting, and she poured upon his  
 hands

Clear water, and anointed him, and set  
 Before him bread.

And Japhet said to him,  
 "My father, my beloved, wilt thou yet  
 Be sad because of scorning? Eat, this  
 day;

For as an angel in their eyes thou art  
 Who stand before thee." But he an-  
 swered, "Peace!

Thy words are wide."

And when Niloiya heard,  
 She said, "Is this a time for mirth of  
 heart

And wine? Behold, I thought to wed  
 my son,

Even this Japhet; but is this a time,  
 When sad is he to whom is my desire,  
 And lying under sorrow as from God?"

He answered, "Yea, it is a time of  
 times;

Bring in the maid." Niloiya said,  
 "The maid

That first I spoke on, shall not Japhet  
 wed;

It likes not her, nor yet it likes not me.  
 But I have found another; yea, good

sooth,  
 The damsel will not tarry, she will come

With all her slaves by sundown."

And she said,  
 "Comfort thy heart, and eat: more-  
 over, know

How that thy great work even to-day is  
 done.

Sir, thy great ship is finished, and the  
 folk

(For I, according to thy will, have paid  
 All that was left us to them for their  
 wage)

Have brought, as to a storehouse, flour  
 of wheat,

Honey and oil,—much victual; yea,  
 and fruits,

Curtains and household gear. And,  
 sir, they say  
 It is thy will to take it for thy hold,  
 Our fastness and abode." He answered,  
 "Yea,  
 Else wherefore was it built?" She  
 said, "Good sir,  
 I pray you make us not the whole  
 earth's scorn.  
 And now, to-morrow in thy father's  
 house  
 Is a great feast, and weddings are to-  
 ward;  
 Let be the ship, till after, for thy words  
 Have ever been, 'If God shall send a  
 flood,  
 There will I dwell;' I pray you there-  
 fore wait  
 At least till He DOTH send it."

And he turned,  
 And answered nothing. Now the sun  
 was low  
 While yet she spake; and Japhet came  
 to them  
 In goodly raiment, and upon his arm  
 The garment of betrothal. And with  
 that  
 A noise, and then brake in a woman-  
 slave  
 And Amarant. This, with folding of  
 her hands,  
 Did say full meekly, "If I do offend,  
 Yet have not I been willing to offend;  
 For now this woman will not be denied  
 Herself to tell her errand."

And they sat.  
 Then spoke the woman, "If I do  
 offend,  
 Pray you forgive the bond-slave, for her  
 tongue  
 Is for her mistress. 'Lo,' my mistress  
 saith,  
 'Put off thy bravery, bridegroom; fold  
 away,  
 Mother, thy webs of pride, thy costly  
 robes  
 Woven of many colors. We have  
 heard  
 Thy master. Lo, to-day right evil  
 things  
 He prophesied to us that were his  
 friends;

Therefore, my answer: — God do so to  
 me;  
 Yea, God do so to me, more also, more  
 Than he did threaten, if my damsel's  
 foot  
 Ever draw nigh thy door.'"

And when she heard,  
 Niloiya sat amazed, in grief of soul.  
 But Japhet came unto the slave, where  
 low  
 She bowed herself for fear. He said,  
 "Depart;  
 Say to thy mistress, 'It is well'"  
 With that  
 She turned herself, and she made haste  
 to flee,  
 Lest any, for those evil words she  
 brought,  
 Would smite her. But the bondmaid  
 of the house  
 Lift up her hand and said, "If I  
 offend,  
 It was not of my heart: thy damsel  
 knew  
 Naught of this matter." And he held  
 to her  
 His hand and touched her, and said,  
 "Amarant!"  
 And when she looked upon him, she  
 did take  
 And spread before her face her radiant  
 locks,  
 Trembling. And Japhet said, "Lift  
 up thy face,  
 O fairest of the daughters, thy fair  
 face;  
 For, lo! the bridegroom standeth with  
 the robe  
 Of thy betrothal!" — and he took her  
 locks  
 In his two hands to part them from  
 her brow,  
 And laid them on her shoulders; and  
 he said,  
 "Sweet are the blushes of thy face,"  
 and put  
 The robe upon her, having said, "Be-  
 hold,  
 I have repented me; and oft by night,  
 In the waste wilderness, while all  
 things slept,  
 I thought upon thy words, for they  
 were sweet.

"For this I make thee free. And now  
 thyself  
 Art loveliest in mine eyes; I look, and  
 lo!  
 Thou art of beauty more than any  
 thought  
 I had concerning thee. Let, then, this  
 robe,  
 Wrought on with imagery of fruitful  
 bough,  
 And graceful leaf, and birds with ten-  
 der eyes,  
 Cover the ripples of thy tawny hair."  
 So, when she held her peace, he  
 brought her nigh  
 To hear the speech of wedlock; ay, he  
 took  
 The golden cup of wine to drink with  
 her,  
 And laid the sheaf upon her arms. He  
 said,  
 "Like as my fathers in the older days  
 Led home the daughters whom they  
 chose, do I;  
 Like as they said, 'Mine honor have I  
 set  
 Upon thy head!' do I. Eat of my  
 bread,  
 Rule in my house, be mistress of my  
 slaves,  
 And mother of my children."

And he brought  
 The damsel to his father, saying, "Be-  
 hold  
 My wife! I have betrothed her to my-  
 self;  
 I pray you, kiss her." And the Mas-  
 ter did:  
 He said, "Be mother of a multitude,  
 And let them to their father even so  
 Be found as he is found to me."

With that  
 She answered, "Let this woman, sir,  
 find grace  
 And favor in your sight."

And Japhet said,  
 "Sweet mother, I have wed the maid  
 ye chose  
 And brought me first. I leave her in  
 thy hand;

Have care on her, till I shall come  
 again  
 And ask her of thee." So they went  
 apart,  
 He and his father, to the marriage  
 feast.

## BOOK IX.

THE prayer of Noah. The man went  
 forth by night  
 And listened; and the earth was dark  
 and still,  
 And he was driven of his great distress  
 Into the forest; but the birds of night  
 Sang sweetly; and he fell upon his  
 face,  
 And cried, "God, God! Thy billows  
 and Thy waves  
 Have swallowed up my soul.

"Where is my God?  
 For I have somewhat yet to plead with  
 Thee;  
 For I have walked the strands of Thy  
 great deep,  
 Heard the dull thunder of its rage afar,  
 And its dread moaning. O, the field  
 is sweet,—  
 Spare it. The delicate woods make  
 white their trees  
 With blossom,—spare them. Life is  
 sweet; behold  
 There is much cattle, and the wild and  
 tame,  
 Father, do feed in quiet,—spare them.

"God!  
 Where is my God? The long wave  
 doth not rear  
 Her ghostly crest to lick the forest up,  
 And like a chief in battle fall,—not  
 yet.  
 The lightnings pour not down, from  
 ragged holes  
 In heaven, the torment of their forked  
 tongues,  
 And, like fell serpents, dart and sting,  
 —not yet.  
 The winds awake not, with their awful  
 wings  
 To winnow, even as chaff, from out  
 their track,

All that withstandeth, and bring down  
the pride  
Of all things strong and all things  
high, —

“Not yet.  
O, let it not be yet. Where is my  
God?  
How am I saved, if I and mine be  
saved  
Alone? I am not saved, for I have  
loved  
My country and my kin. Must I, Thy  
thrall,  
Over their lands be lord when they are  
gone?  
I would not: spare them, Mighty.  
Spare Thyself,  
For Thou dost love them greatly, —  
and if not . . .”

Another praying unremote, a Voice  
Calm as the solitude between wide  
stars.

“Where is my God, who loveth this  
lost world, —  
Lost from its place and name, but won  
for Thee?  
Where is my multitude, my multi-  
tude,  
That I shall gather?” And white  
smoke went up  
From incense that was burning, but  
there gleamed  
No light of fire, save dimly to re-  
veal  
The whiteness rising, as the prayer of  
him  
That mourned. “My God, appear for  
me, appear;  
Give me my multitude, for it is mine.  
The bitterness of death I have not  
feared,  
To-morrow shall Thy courts, O God,  
be full.  
Then shall the captive from his bonds  
go free,  
Then shall the thrall find rest, that  
knew not rest  
From labor and from blows. The sor-  
rowful —  
That said of joy, ‘What is it?’ and of  
songs,

‘We have not heard them’ — shall be  
glad and sing;  
Then shall the little ones that knew not  
Thee,  
And such as heard not of Thee, see  
Thy face,  
And, seeing, dwell content.”

The prayer of Noah.  
He cried out in the darkness, “Hear,  
O God,  
Hear HIM: hear this one; through  
the gates of death,  
If life be all past praying for, O give  
To Thy great multitude a way to  
peace;  
Give them to HIM.

“But yet,” said he, “O yet,  
If there be respite for the terrible,  
The proud, yea, such as scorn Thee, —  
and if not . . .  
Let not mine eyes behold their fall.”

He cried,  
“Forgive. I have not done Thy work,  
Great Judge,  
With a perfect heart; I have but half  
believed,  
While in accustomed language I have  
warned;  
And now there is no more to do, no  
place  
For my repentance, yea, no hour re-  
mains  
For doing of that work again. O  
lost,  
Lost world!” And while he prayed,  
the daylight dawned.

And Noah went up into the ship, and  
sat  
Before the Lord. And all was still;  
and now  
In that great quietness the sun came  
up,  
And there were marks across it, as it  
were  
The shadow of a Hand upon the  
sun, —  
Three fingers dark and dead, and  
afterward

There rose a white thick mist, that  
peacefully  
Folded the fair earth in her funeral  
shroud, —  
The earth that gave no token, save that  
now  
There fell a little trembling under foot.

And Noah went down, and took and  
hid his face  
Behind his mantle, saying, "I have  
made  
Great preparation, and it may be  
yet,  
Beside my house, whom I did charge  
to come  
This day to meet me, there may enter  
in  
Many that yesternight thought scorn of  
all  
My bidding." And because the fog  
was thick,  
He said, "Forbid it, Heaven, if such  
there be,  
That they should miss the way." And  
even then  
There was a noise of weeping and lament;  
The words of them that were affrighted,  
yea,  
And cried for grief of heart. There  
came to him  
The mother and her children, and they  
cried,  
"Speak, father, what is this? What  
hast thou done?"  
And when he lifted up his face, he  
saw  
Japhet, his well-belovèd, where he  
stood  
Apart; and Amarant leaned upon his  
breast,  
And hid her face, for she was sore  
afraid;  
And lo! the robes of her betrothal  
gleamed  
White in the deadly gloom.

And at his feet  
The wives of his two other sons did  
kneel,  
And wring their hands.

One cried, "O, speak to us;  
We are affrighted; we have dreamed a  
dream,  
Each to herself. For me, I saw in  
mine  
The grave old angels, like to shepherds,  
walk,  
Much cattle following them. Thy  
daughter looked,  
And they did enter here."

The other lay  
And moaned, "Alas! O father, for my  
dream  
Was evil: lo, I heard when it was dark,  
I heard two wicked ones contend for  
me.  
One said, 'And wherefore should this  
woman live,  
When only for her children, and for  
her,  
Is woe and degradation?' Then he  
laughed,  
The other crying, 'Let alone, O  
Prince;  
Hinder her not to live and bear much  
seed,  
Because I hate her.'"

But he said, "Rise up,  
Daughters of Noah, for I have learned  
no words  
To comfort you." Then spake her  
lord to her,  
"Peace! or I swear that for thy dream  
myself  
Will hate thee also."

And Niloiya said,  
"My sons, if one of you will hear my  
words,  
Go now, look out, and tell me of the  
day,  
How fares it?"

And the fateful darkness grew.  
But Shera went up to do his mother's  
will;  
And all was one as though the frightened  
earth  
Quivered and fell a-trembling; then  
they hid

Their faces every one, till he returned,  
 And spake not. "Nay," they cried,  
 "what hast thou seen?"  
 O, is it come to this?" He answered  
 them,  
 "The door is shut."

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## CONTRASTED SONGS.

### SAILING BEYOND SEAS.

(*Old Style.*)

METHOUGHT the stars were blinking  
 bright,  
 And the old brig's sails unfurled;  
 I said, "I will sail to my love this  
 night  
 At the other side of the world."  
 I stepped aboard, — we sailed so fast, —  
 The sun shot up from the bourn;  
 But a dove that perched upon the mast  
 Did mourn, and mourn, and mourn.  
 O fair dove! O fond dove!  
 And dove with the white breast,  
 Let me alone, the dream is my own,  
 And my heart is full of rest.

My true love fares on this great hill,  
 Feeding his sheep for aye;  
 I looked in his hut, but all was still,  
 My love was gone away.  
 I went to gaze in the forest creek,  
 And the dove mourned on apace;  
 No flame did flash, nor fair blue reek  
 Rose up to show me his place.  
 O last love! O first love!  
 My love with the true heart,  
 To think I have come to this your  
 home,  
 And yet — we are apart!

My love! He stood at my right hand,  
 His eyes were grave and sweet.  
 Methought he said, "In this far land,  
 O, is it thus we meet?"  
 Ah, maid most dear, I am not here;  
 I have no place, — no part, —

No dwelling more by sea or shore,  
 But only in thy heart."  
 O fair dove! O fond dove!  
 Till night rose over the bourn,  
 The dove on the mast, as we sailed  
 fast,  
 Did mourn, and mourn, and  
 mourn.

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## REMONSTRANCE.

DAUGHTERS of Eve! your mother did  
 not well:  
 She laid the apple in your father's  
 hand,  
 And we have read, O wonder! what  
 befell, —  
 The man was not deceived, nor yet  
 could stand;  
 He chose to lose, for love of her, his  
 throne, —  
 With her could die, but could not live  
 alone.

Daughters of Eve! he did not fall so  
 low,  
 Nor fall so far, as that sweet woman  
 fell;  
 For something better, than as gods to  
 know,  
 That husband in that home left off  
 to dwell:  
 For this, till love be reckoned less than  
 lore,  
 Shall man be first and best for ever-  
 more.

Daughters of Eve! it was for your dear  
 sake  
 The world's first hero died an un-  
 crowned king;  
 But God's great pity touched the grand  
 mistake,  
 And made his married love a sacred  
 thing:  
 For yet his nobler sons, if aught be  
 true,  
 Find the lost Eden in their love to  
 you.

SONG FOR THE NIGHT OF  
CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

(*A Humble Imitation.*)

"And birds of calm sit brooding on  
the charmed wave."

It is the noon of night,  
And the world's Great Light  
Gone out, she widow-like doth carry  
her:

The moon hath veiled her face,  
Nor looks on that dread place  
Where He lieth dead in sealed sepul-  
chre;

And heaven and hades, emptied,  
lend

Their flocking multitudes to watch and  
wait the end.

Tier above tier they rise,  
Their wings new line the skies,  
And shed out comforting light among  
the stars;

But they of the other place  
The heavenly signs deface,  
The gloomy brand of hell their bright-  
ness mars;

Yet high they sit in thronèd state, —  
It is the hour of darkness to them dedi-  
cate.

And first and highest set,  
Where the black shades are met,  
The lord of night and hades leans  
him down;

His gleaming eyeballs show  
More awful than the glow  
Which hangeth by the points of his  
dread crown;

And at his feet, where lightnings  
play,

The fatal sisters sit and weep, and  
curse their day.

Lo! one, with eyes all wide,  
As she were sight denied,  
Sits blindly feeling at her distaff old;  
One, as distraught with woe,  
Letting the spindle go,

Her starry-sprinkled gown doth shiv-  
ering fold;  
And one right mournful hangs her  
head,  
Complaining, "Woe is me! I may not  
cut the thread.

"All men of every birth,  
Yea, great ones of the earth,  
Kings and their councillors, have I  
drawn down;  
But I am held of Thee, —  
Why dost Thou trouble me,  
To bring me up, dead King, that  
keep'st Thy crown?  
Yet for all courtiers hast but ten  
Lowly, unlettered, Galilean fishermen.

"Olympian heights are bare  
Of whom men worshipped there,  
Immortal feet their snows may print  
no more;  
Their stately powers below  
Lie desolate, nor know  
This thirty years Thessalian grove or  
shore;  
But I am elder far than they; —  
Where is the sentence writ that I must  
pass away?

"Art thou come up for this,  
Dark regent, awful Dis?  
And hast thou moved the deep to  
mark our ending?  
And stirred the dens beneath  
To see us eat of death,  
With all the scoffing heavens toward  
us bending?  
Help! powers of ill, see not us  
die!"  
But neither demon dares, nor angel  
deigns, reply.

Her sisters, fallen on sleep,  
Fade in the upper deep,  
And their grim lord sits on, in doleful  
trance;  
Till her black veil she rends,  
And with her death-shriek bends  
Downward the terrors of her counte-  
nance;

Then, whelmed in night and no  
more seen,  
They leave the world a doubt if ever  
such have been.

And the winged armies twain  
Their awful watch maintain ;  
They mark the earth at rest with her  
Great Dead.  
Behold, from Antres wide,  
Green Atlas heave his side ;  
His moving woods their scarlet clus-  
ters shed,  
The swathing coif his front that  
cools,  
And tawny lions lapping at his palm-  
edged pools.

Then like a heap of snow,  
Lying where grasses grow,  
See glimmering, while the moony  
lustres creep,  
Mild-mannered Athens, dight  
In dewy marbles white,  
Among her goddesses and gods  
asleep ;  
And, swaying on a purple sea,  
The many moored galleys clustering at  
her quay.

Also, 'neath palm-trees' shade,  
Amid their camels laid,  
The pastoral tribes with all their  
flocks at rest ;  
Like to those old-world folk  
With whom two angels broke  
The bread of men at Abram's cour-  
teous 'quest,  
When, listening as they prophe-  
sied,  
His desert princess, being reprovèd,  
her laugh denied.

Or from the Morians' land  
See worshipped Nilus bland,  
Taking the silver road he gave the  
world,  
To wet his ancient shrine  
With waters held divine,  
And touch his temple steps with  
wavelets curled,

And list, ere darkness change to  
gray,  
Old minstrel-throated Memnon chant-  
ing in the day.

Moreover, Indian glades,  
Where kneel the sun-swart maids,  
On Gunga's flood their votive flow-  
ers to throw,  
And launch i' the sultry night  
Their burning cressets bright,  
Most like a fleet of stars that south-  
ing go,  
Till on her bosom prosperously  
She floats them shining forth to sail the  
lullèd sea.

Nor bend they not their eyn  
Where the watch-fires shine,  
By shepherds fed, on hills of Beth-  
lehem :  
They mark, in goodly wise,  
The city of David rise,  
The gates and towers of rare Jeru-  
salem ;  
And hear the 'scapèd Kedron fret,  
And night dews dropping from the  
leaves of Olivet.

But now the setting moon  
To curtainèd lands must soon,  
In her obedient fashion, minister ;  
She first, as loath to go,  
Lets her last silver flow  
Upon her Master's sealèd sepulchre ;  
And trees that in the garden  
spread,  
She kisseth all for sake of His low-  
lying head,

Then 'neath the rim goes down ;  
And night with darker frown  
Sinks on the fateful garden watchèd  
long ;  
When some despairing eyes,  
Far in the murky skies,  
The unwishèd waking by their gloom  
foretell ;  
And blackness up the welkin  
swings,  
And drinks the mild effulgence from  
celestial wings.



Last, with amazed cry,  
The hosts asunder fly,  
Leaving an empty gulf of blackest  
hue ;  
Whence straightway shooteth  
down,  
By the Great Father thrown,  
A mighty angel, strong and dread to  
view ;  
And at his fall the rocks are rent,  
The waiting world doth quake with  
mortal trembling ;

The regions far and near  
Quail with a pause of fear,  
More terrible than aught since time  
began ;  
The winds, that dare not fleet,  
Drop at his awful feet,  
And in its bed wails the wide ocean ;  
The flower of dawn forbears to  
blow,  
And the oldest running river cannot  
skill to flow.

At stand, by that dread place,  
He lifts his radiant face,  
And looks to heaven with reverent  
love and fear ;  
Then, while the welkin quakes,  
And muttering thunder breaks,  
And lightnings shoot and ominous  
meteors drear,  
And all the daunted earth doth  
moan,  
He from the doors of death rolls back  
the sealèd stone. —

— In regal quiet deep,  
Lo, One new waked from sleep !  
Behold, He standeth in the rock-  
hewn door !  
Thy children shall not die, —  
Peace, peace, thy Lord is by !  
He liveth ! — they shall live for ever-  
more.  
Peace ! lo, He lifts a priestly hand,  
And blesseth all the sons of men in  
every land.

Then, with great dread and wail,  
Fall down, like storms of hail,  
The legions of the lost in fearful  
wise ;

And they whose blissful race  
Peoples the better place  
Lift up their wings to cover their fair  
eyes,  
And through the waxing saffron  
brede,  
Till they are lost in light, recede, and  
yet recede.

So while the fields are dim,  
And the red sun his rim  
First heaves, in token of his reign  
benign,  
All stars the most admired,  
Into their blue retired,  
Lie hid, — the faded moon forgets to  
shine, —  
And, hurrying down the sphery  
way,  
Night flies and sweeps her shadow from  
the paths of day.

But look ! the Saviour blest,  
Calm after solemn rest,  
Stands in the garden 'neath His olive-  
boughs ;  
The earliest smile of day  
Doth on His vesture play,  
And light the majesty of His still  
brows ;  
While angels hang with wings out-  
spread,  
Holding the new-won crown above His  
saintly head.

### SONG OF MARGARET.

Av, I saw her, we have met, —  
Married eyes, how sweet they be, —  
Are you happier, Margaret,  
Than you might have been with me ?  
Silence ! make no more ado !  
Did she think I should forget ?  
Matters nothing, though I knew,  
Margaret, Margaret.

Once those eyes, full sweet, full shy,  
Told a certain thing to mine ;  
What they told me I put by,  
O, so careless of the sign.

Such an easy thing to take,  
And I did not want it then ;  
Fool! I wish my heart would break,  
Scorn is hard on hearts of men.

Scorn of self is bitter work, —  
Each of us has felt it now :  
Bluest skies she counted mirk,  
Self-betrayed of eyes and brow ;  
As for me, I went my way,  
And a better man drew nigh,  
Fain to earn, with long essay,  
What the winner's hand threw by.

Matters not in deserts old,  
What was born, and waxed, and  
yearned,  
Year to year its meaning told,  
I am come, — its deeps are learned, —  
Come, but there is naught to say, —  
Married eyes with mine have met.  
Silence! O, I had my day,  
Margaret, Margaret.

### SONG OF THE GOING AWAY.

"OLD man, upon the green hillside,  
With yellow flowers besprinkled o'er,  
How long in silence wilt thou bide  
At this low stone door?

"I stoop: within 'tis dark and still ;  
But shadowy paths methinks there  
be,  
And lead thee far into the hill?"  
"Traveller, come and see."

"'Tis dark, 'tis cold, and hung with  
gloom ;  
I care not now within to stay ;  
For thee and me is scarcely room,  
I will hence away."

"Not so, not so, thou youthful guest,  
Thy foot shall issue forth no more :  
Behold the chamber of thy rest,  
And the closing door!"

"O, have I 'scaped the whistling ball,  
And striven on smoky fields of fight,  
And scaled the 'leaguered city's wall  
In the dangerous night ;

"And borne my life unharmèd still  
Through foaming gulfs of yeasty  
spray,  
To yield it on a grassy hill  
At the noon of day?"

"Peace! Say thy prayers, and go to  
sleep,  
Till *some time*, ONE my seal shall  
break,  
And deep shall answer unto deep,  
When He crieth, 'AWAKE!'"

### A LILY AND A LUTE.

(*Song of the uncommunicated Ideal.*)

#### I.

I OPENED the eyes of my soul.

And behold,  
A white river-lily: a lily awake, and  
aware, —  
For she set her face upward, — aware  
how in scarlet and gold  
A long wrinkled cloud, left behind of  
the wandering air,  
Lay over with fold upon fold,  
With fold upon fold.

And the blushing sweet shame of the  
cloud made her also ashamed,  
The white river-lily, that suddenly  
knew she was fair ;  
And over the far-away mountains that  
no man hath named,  
And that no foot hath trod,  
Flung down out of heavenly places,  
there fell, as it were,  
A rose-bloom, a token of love, that  
should make them endure,  
Withdrawn in snow silence forever, who  
keep themselves pure,  
And look up to God.

Then I said, "In rosy air,  
Cradled on thy reaches fair,  
While the blushing early ray  
Whitens into perfect day,  
River-lily, sweetest known,  
Art thou set for me alone?  
Nay, but I will bear thee far,  
Where yon clustering steeples are,  
And the bells ring out o'erhead,  
And the stated prayers are said;  
And the busy farmer's pace,  
Trading in the market-place;  
And the country lasses sit  
By their butter, praising it;  
And the latest news is told,  
While the fruit and cream are sold;  
And the friendly gossips greet,  
Up and down the sunny street.  
For," I said, "I have not met,  
White one, any folk as yet  
Who would send no blessing up,  
Looking on a face like thine;  
For thou art as Joseph's cup,  
And by thee might they divine.

"Nay! but thou a spirit art;  
Men shall take thee in the mart  
For the ghost of their best thought,  
Raised at noon, and near them  
brought;  
Or the prayer they made last night,  
Set before them all in white."

And I put out my rash hand,  
For I thought to draw to land  
The white lily. Was it fit  
Such a blossom should expand,  
Fair enough for a world's wonder,  
And no mortal gather it?  
No. I strove, and it went under,  
And I drew, but it went down;  
And the water-weeds' long tresses,  
And the overlapping cresses,  
Sullied its admired crown.  
Then along the river strand,  
Trailing, wrecked, it came to land,  
Of its beauty half despoiled,  
And its snowy pureness soiled:  
O! I took it in my hand, —  
You will never see it now,  
White and golden as it grew:  
No, I cannot show it you,  
Nor the cheerful town endow  
With the freshness of its brow.

If a royal painter, great  
With the colors dedicate  
To a dove's neck, a sea-bight,  
And the flickerings over white  
Mountain summits far away, —  
One content to give his mind  
To the enrichment of mankind,  
And the laying up of light  
In men's houses, — on that day,  
Could have passed in kingly mood,  
Would he ever have endued  
Canvas with the peerless thing,  
In the grace that it did bring,  
And the light that o'er it flowed,  
With the pureness that it showed,  
And the pureness that it meant?  
Could he skill to make it seen  
As he saw? For this, I ween,  
He were likewise impotent.

II.

I opened the doors of my heart.

And behold,  
There was music within and a song,  
And echoes did feed on the sweetness,  
repeating it long.

I opened the doors of my heart. And  
behold,

There was music that played itself out  
in æolian notes;

Then was heard, as a far-away bell at  
long intervals tolled,

That murmurs and floats,  
And presently dieth, forgotten of forest  
and wild,

And comes in all passion again and a  
tremblement soft,

That maketh the listener full oft  
To whisper, "Ah! would I might hear  
it forever and aye,

When I toil in the heat of the day,  
When I walk in the cold."

I opened the door of my heart. And  
behold,

There was music within, and a song.  
But while I was hearkening, lo, black-  
ness without, thick and strong,  
Came up and came over, and all that  
sweet fluting was drowned,

I could hear it no more;

For the welkin was moaning, the waters  
 were stirred on the shore,  
 And trees in the dark all around  
 Were shaken. It thundered. "Hark,  
 hark! there is thunder to-night!  
 The sullen long wave rears her head,  
 and comes down with a will;  
 The awful white tongues are let loose,  
 and the stars are all dead;—  
 There is thunder! it thunders! and  
 ladders of light

Run up. There is thunder!" I  
 said,  
 "Loud thunder! it thunders! and up  
 in the dark overhead,  
 A down-pouring cloud (there is thun-  
 der!), a down-pouring cloud  
 Hails out her fierce message, and quiv-  
 ers the deep in its bed,  
 And cowers the earth held at bay; and  
 they mutter aloud,  
 And pause with an ominous tremble,  
 till, great in their rage,  
 The heavens and earth come together,  
 and meet with a crash;  
 And the fight is so fell as if Time had  
 come down with the flash,  
 And the story of life was all read,  
 And the Giver had turned the last  
 page

Now their bar the pent water-floods  
 lash,  
 And the forest trees give out their lan-  
 guage austere with great age;  
 And there flieth o'er moor and o'er  
 hill,  
 And there heaveth at intervals wide,  
 The long sob of nature's great passion,  
 as loath to subside,  
 Until quiet drop down on the tide,  
 And mad Echo hath moaned herself  
 still.

Lo! or ever I was 'ware,  
 In the silence of the air,  
 Through my heart's wide-open door,  
 Music floated forth once more,  
 Floated to the world's dark rim,  
 And looked over with a hymn;  
 Then came home with flutings fine,  
 And discoursed in tones divine  
 Of a certain grief of mine;

And went downward and went in,  
 Glimpses of my soul to win,  
 And discovered such a deep  
 That I could not choose but weep,  
 For it lay, a land-locked sea,  
 Fathomless and dim to me.

O the song! it came and went,  
 Went and came.

I have not learned  
 Half the lore whereto it yearned,  
 Half the magic that it meant.  
 Water booming in a cave;  
 Or the swell of some long wave,  
 Setting in from unrevealed  
 Countries; or a foreign tongue,  
 Sweetly talked and deftly sung,  
 While the meaning is half sealed;  
 May be like it. You have heard  
 Also;—can you find a word  
 For the naming of such song?  
 No; a name would do it wrong.  
 You have heard it in the night,  
 In the dropping rain's despite,  
 In the midnight darkness deep,  
 When the children were asleep,  
 And the wife—no, let that be;  
 SHE asleep! She knows right well  
 What the song to you and me,  
 While we breathe, can never tell;  
 She hath heard its faultless flow,  
 Where the roots of music grow.

While I listened, like young birds,  
 Hints were fluttering; almost words,—  
 Leaned and leaned, and nearer came;—  
 Everything had changed its name.

Sorrow was a ship, I found,  
 Wrecked with them that in her are,  
 On an island richer far  
 Than the port where they were bound.  
 Fear was but the awful boom  
 Of the old great bell of doom,  
 Tolling, far from earthly air,  
 For all worlds to go to prayer.  
 Pain, that to us mortal clings,  
 But the pushing of our wings,  
 That we have no use for yet,  
 And the uprooting of our feet  
 From the soil where they are set,  
 And the land we reckon sweet.

Love in growth, the grand deceit  
Whereby men the perfect greet;  
Love in wane, the blessing sent  
To be (howsoe'er it went)  
Nevermore with earth content.

O, full sweet, and O, full high,  
Ran that music up the sky;  
But I cannot sing it you,  
More than I can make you view,  
With my paintings labial,  
Sitting up in awful row,  
White old men majestic,  
Mountains, in their gowns of snow,  
Ghosts of kings; as my two eyes,  
Looking over speckled skies,  
See them now. About their knees,  
Half in haze, there stands at ease  
A great army of green hills,  
Some bareheaded; and, behold,  
Small green mosses creep on some.  
Those be mighty forests old;  
And white avalanches come  
Through yon rents, where now distils  
Sheeny silver, pouring down  
To a tune of old renown,  
Cutting narrow pathways through  
Gentian belts of airy blue,  
To a zone where starwort blows,  
And long reaches of the rose.

So, that haze all left behind,  
Down the chestnut forests wind,  
Past yon jagged spires, where yet  
Foot of man was never set;  
Past a castle yawning wide,  
With a great breach in its side,  
To a nest-like valley, where,  
Like a sparrow's egg in hue,  
Lie two lakes, and teach the true  
Color of the sea-maid's hair.

What beside? The world beside!  
Drawing down and down to greet  
Cottage clusters at our feet, —  
Every scent of summer tide, —  
Flowery pastures all aglow  
(Men and women mowing go  
Up and down them); also soft  
Floating of the film aloft,  
Fluttering of the leaves aloft.  
Is this told? It is not told.  
Where's the danger? where's the cold

Slippery danger up the steep?  
Where yon shadow fallen asleep?  
Chirping bird and tumbling spray,  
Light, work, laughter, scent of hay,  
Peace, and echo, where are they?

Ah, they sleep, sleep all untold;  
Memory must their grace enfold  
Silently; and that high song  
Of the heart, it doth belong  
To the hearers. Not a whit,  
Though a chief musician heard,  
Could he make a tune for it.

Though a lute full deftly strung,  
And the sweetest bird e'er sung,  
Could have tried it, — O, the lute  
For that wondrous song were mute,  
And the bird would do her part,  
Falter, fail, and break her heart, —  
Break her heart, and furl her wings,  
On the unexpressive strings.

## GLADYS AND HER ISLAND.

*(On the Advantages of the Poetical  
Temperament.)*

AN IMPERFECT FABLE WITH A DOUBT-  
FUL MORAL.

O HAPPY Gladys! I rejoice with her,  
For Gladys saw the island.

It was thus:  
They gave a day for pleasure in the  
school  
Where Gladys taught; and all the  
other girls  
Were taken out to picnic in a wood.  
But it was said, "We think it were not  
well  
That little Gladys should acquire a  
taste  
For pleasure, going about, and needless  
change.  
It would not suit her station: discon-  
tent  
Might come of it; and all her duties  
now

She does so pleasantly, that we were  
 best  
 To keep her humble." So they said  
 to her,  
 "Gladys, we shall not want you, all to-  
 day.  
 Look, you are free; you need not sit at  
 work:  
 No, you may take a long and pleasant  
 walk  
 Over the sea-cliff, or upon the beach  
 Among the visitors."

Then Gladys blushed  
 For joy, and thanked them. What! a  
 holiday,  
 A whole one, for herself! How good,  
 how kind!  
 With that, the marshalled carriages  
 drove off;  
 And Gladys, sobered with her weight  
 of joy,  
 Stole out beyond the groups upon the  
 beach —  
 The children with their wooden spades,  
 the band  
 That played for lovers, and the sunny  
 stir  
 Of cheerful life and leisure — to the  
 rocks,  
 For these she wanted most, and there  
 was time  
 To mark them; how like ruined organs  
 prone  
 They lay, or leaned their giant fluted  
 pipes,  
 And let the great white-crested reck'less  
 wave  
 Beat out their booming melody.

The sea  
 Was filled with light; in clear blue  
 caverns curled  
 The breakers, and they ran, and seemed  
 to romp,  
 As playing at some rough and danger-  
 ous game,  
 While all the nearer waves rushed in to  
 help,  
 And all the farther heaved their heads  
 to peep,  
 And tossed the fishing-boats. Then  
 Gladys laughed,

And said, "O happy tide, to be so  
 lost  
 In sunshine, that one dare not look at  
 it;  
 And lucky cliffs, to be so brown and  
 warm;  
 And yet how lucky are the shadows,  
 too,  
 That lurk beneath their ledges. It is  
 strange,  
 That in remembrance though I lay  
 them up,  
 They are forever, when I come to  
 them,  
 Better than I had thought. O, some-  
 thing yet  
 I had forgotten. Oft I say, 'At least  
 This picture is imprinted; thus and  
 thus,  
 The sharpened serried jags run up, run  
 out,  
 Layer on layer.' And I look — up —  
 up —  
 High, higher up again, till far aloft  
 They cut into their ether — brown, and  
 clear,  
 And perfect. And I, saying, 'This is  
 mine,  
 To keep,' retire; but shortly come  
 again,  
 And they confound me with a glorious  
 change.  
 The low sun out of rain-clouds stares at  
 them;  
 They redden, and their edges drip with  
 — what?  
 I know not, but 'tis red. It leaves no  
 stain,  
 For the next morning they stand up  
 like ghosts  
 In a sea-shroud, and fifty thousand  
 mews  
 Sit there, in long white files, and chat-  
 ter on,  
 Like silly school-girls in their silliest  
 mood.

"There is the boulder where we always  
 turn.  
 O, I have longed to pass it; now I  
 will.  
 What would THEY say? for one must  
 slip and spring;

'Young ladies! Gladys! I am shocked.

My dears,

Decorum, if you please: turn back at once.

Gladys, we blame you most; you should have looked

Before you.' Then they sigh, — how kind they are! —

'What will become of you, if all your life

You look a long way off? — look anywhere,

And everywhere, instead of at your feet,

And where they carry you!' Ah, well, I know

It is a pity," Gladys said; "but then We cannot all be wise: happy for me That other people are.

"And yet I wish, —

For sometimes very right and serious thoughts

Come to me, — I do wish that they would come

When they are wanted! — when I teach the sums

On rainy days, and when the practising

I count to, and the din goes on and on, Still the same tune and still the same

mistake,

Then I am wise enough: sometimes I feel

Quite old. I think that it will last, and say,

'Now my reflections do me credit! now

I am a woman!' and I wish they knew

How serious all my duties look to me, And how my heart hushed down and

shaded lies,

Just like the sea, when low, convenient clouds

Come over, and drink all its sparkles up.

But does it last? Perhaps, that very day,

The front door opens: out we walk in pairs;

And I am so delighted with this world, That suddenly has grown, being new washed,

To such a smiling, clean, and thankful world,

And with a tender face shining through tears,

Looks up into the sometime lowering sky,

That has been angry, but is reconciled, And just forgiving her, that I, — that

I, —

O, I forget myself: what matters how! And then I hear (but always kindly

said)

Some words that pain me so, — but just, but true:

'For if your place in this establishment Be but subordinate, and if your birth

Be lowly, it the more behooves — Well, well,

No more. We see that you are sorry.' Yes!

I am always sorry THEN; but now, — O, now,

Here is a sight more beautiful than all."

"And did they scold her, then, my pretty one?

And did she want to be as wise as they, —

To bear a bucklered heart and priggish mind?

Ay, you may crow; she did! but no, no, no,

The night-time will not let her; all the stars

Say nay to that; the old sea laughs at her.

Why, Gladys is a child; she has not skill

To shut herself within her own small cell,

And build the door up, and to say, 'Poor me!

I am a prisoner;' then to take hewn stones,

And, having built the windows up, to say,

'O, it is dark! there is no sunshine here;

There never has been.' "

Strange! how very strange!

A woman passing Gladys with a babe,

To whom she spoke these words, and  
 only looked  
 Upon the babe, who crowed and pulled  
 her curls,  
 And never looked at Gladys. never  
 once.  
 "A simple child," she added, and went  
 by,  
 "To want to change her greater for  
 their less;  
 But Gladys shall not do it, no, not she;  
 We love her—don't we?—far too  
 well for that."

Then Gladys, flushed with shame and  
 keen surprise,  
 "How could she be so near, and I not  
 know?  
 And have I spoken out my thought  
 aloud?  
 I must have done, forgetting. It is  
 well  
 She walks so fast, for I am hungry now,  
 And here is water cantering down the  
 cliff,  
 And here a shell to catch it with, and  
 here  
 The round plump buns they gave me,  
 and the fruit.  
 Now she is gone behind the rock. O,  
 rare  
 To be alone!" So Gladys sat her  
 down,  
 Unpacked her little basket, ate and  
 drank,  
 Then pushed her hands into the warm  
 dry sand,  
 And thought the earth was happy,  
 and she too  
 Was going round with it in happiness,  
 That holiday. "What was it that she  
 said?"  
 Quoth Gladys, cogitating; "they were  
 kind,  
 The words that woman spoke. She  
 does not know!  
 'Her greater for their less,'—it makes  
 me laugh,—  
 But yet," sighed Gladys, "though it  
 must be good  
 To look and to admire, one should not  
 wish  
 To steal *THEIR* virtues, and to put them  
 on,

Like feathers from another wing; be-  
 side,  
 That calm, and that grave conscious-  
 ness of worth,  
 When all is said, would little suit with  
 me,  
 Who am not worthy When our  
 thoughts are born,  
 Though they be good and humble, one  
 should mind  
 How they are reared, or some will go  
 astray  
 And shame their mother. Cain and  
 Abel both  
 Were only once removed from inno-  
 cence.  
 Why did I envy them? That was not  
 good;  
 Yet it began with my humility."

But as she spake, lo, Gladys raised her  
 eyes,  
 And right before her, on the horizon's  
 edge,  
 Behold, an island! First, she looked  
 away  
 Along the solid rocks and steadfast  
 shore,  
 For she was all amazed, believing not,  
 And then she looked again, and there  
 again  
 Behold, an island! And the tide had  
 turned,  
 The milky sea had got a purple rim,  
 And from the rim that mountain island  
 rose,  
 Purple, with two high peaks, the  
 northern peak  
 The higher, and with fell and precipice,  
 It ran down steeply to the water's  
 brink;  
 But all the southern line was long and  
 soft,  
 Broken with tender curves, and, as she  
 thought,  
 Covered with forest or with sward.  
 But, look!  
 The sun was on the island; and he  
 showed  
 On either peak a dazzling cap of snow.  
 Then Gladys held her breath; she said,  
 "Indeed,  
 Indeed it is an island: how is this,  
 I never saw it till this fortunate



Rare holiday?" And while she strained  
her eyes,  
She thought that it began to fade ; but  
not

To change as clouds do, only to with-  
draw .

And melt into its azure ; and at last,  
Little by little, from her hungry heart,  
• That longed to draw things marvellous  
to itself,

And yearned towards the riches and the  
great

Abundance of the beauty God hath  
made,

It passed away. Tears started in her  
eyes,

And when they dropt, the mountain  
isle was gone ;

The careless sea had quite forgotten it,  
And all was even as it had been before.

And Gladys wept, but there was luxury  
In her self-pity, while she softly sobbed,  
"O, what a little while ! I am afraid  
I shall forget that purple mountain isle,  
The lovely hollows atween her snow-  
clad peaks,

The grace of her upheaval where she  
lay

Well up against the open. O, my heart,  
Now I remember how this holiday  
Will soon be done, and now my life  
goes on

Not fed ; and only in the noonday walk  
Let to look silently at what it wants,  
Without the power to wait or pause  
awhile,

And understand and draw within itself  
The richness of the earth. A holiday !  
How few I have ! I spend the silent  
time

At work, while all THEIR pupils are  
gone home,

And feel myself remote. They shine  
apart ;

They are great planets, I a little orb ;  
My little orbit far within their own  
Turns, and approaches not. But yet,  
the more

I am alone when those I teach return ;  
For they, as planets of some other sun,  
Not mine, have paths that can but  
meet my ring

Once in a cycle. O, how poor I am !

I have not got laid up in this blank  
heart

Any indulgent kisses given me  
Because I had been good, or, yet more  
sweet,

Because my childhood was itself a  
good

Attractive thing for kisses, tender  
praise,

And comforting. An orphan-school at  
best

Is a cold mother in the winter time  
( 'Twas mostly winter when new or-  
phans came ),

An unregardful mother in the spring.

"Yet once a year (I did mine wrong)  
we went

To gather cowslips. How we thought  
on it

Beforehand, pacing, pacing the dull  
street,

To that one tree, the only one we saw  
From April, — if the cowslips were in  
bloom

So early ; or, if not, from opening  
May

Even to September. Then there came  
the feast

At Epping. If it rained that day, it  
rained

For a whole year to us ; we could not  
think

Of fields and hawthorn hedges, and the  
leaves

Fluttering, but still it rained, and ever  
rained.

"Ah, well, but I am here ; but I have  
seen

The gay gorse bushes in their flowering  
time ;

I know the scent of bean-fields ; I have  
heard

The satisfying murmur of the main."

The woman ! she came round the rock  
again

With her fair baby, and she sat her  
down

By Gladys, murmuring, "Who forbade  
the grass

To grow by visitations of the dew ?

Who said in ancient time to the desert  
 pool,  
 'Thou shalt not wait for angel visitors  
 To trouble thy still water?' Must we  
 bide  
 At home? The lore, beloved, shall fly  
 to us  
 On a pair of sumptuous wings. Or  
 may we breathe  
 Without? O, we shall draw to us the  
 air  
 That times and mystery feed on. This  
 shall lay  
 Unhidden hands upon the heart o' the  
 world,  
 And feel it beating. Rivers shall run  
 on,  
 Full of sweet language as a lover's  
 mouth,  
 Delivering of a tune to make her youth  
 More beautiful than wheat when it is  
 green.

"What else? — (O, none shall envy  
 her!) The rain  
 And the wild weather will be most her  
 own,  
 And talk with her o' nights; and if the  
 winds  
 Have seen aught wondrous, they will  
 tell it her  
 In a mouthful of strange moans, — will  
 bring from far,  
 Her ears being keen, the lowing and  
 the mad,  
 Masterful tramping of the bison herds,  
 Tearing down headlong with their  
 bloodshot eyes,  
 In savage rifts of hair; the crack and  
 creak  
 Of ice-floes in the frozen sea, the cry  
 Of the white bears, all in a dim blue  
 world  
 Mumbling their meals by twilight; or  
 the rock  
 And majesty of motion, when their  
 heads  
 Primeval trees toss in a sunny storm,  
 And hail their nuts down on unweeded  
 fields.  
 No holidays," quoth she; "drop, drop,  
 O, drop,  
 Thou tired skylark, and go up no  
 more;

You lime-trees, cover not your head  
 with bees,  
 Nor give out your good smell. She  
 will not look;  
 No, Gladys cannot draw your sweet-  
 ness in,  
 For lack of holidays." So Gladys  
 thought,  
 "A most strange woman, and she talks  
 of me."  
 With that a girl ran up: "Mother,"  
 she said,  
 "Come out of this brown bight, I pray  
 you now,  
 It smells of fairies." Gladys thereon  
 thought,  
 "The mother will not speak to me,  
 perhaps  
 The daughter may," and asked her  
 courteously,  
 "What do the fairies smell of?" But  
 the girl  
 With peevish pout replied, "You know,  
 you know."  
 "Not I," said Gladys; then she an-  
 swered her,  
 "Something like buttercups. But,  
 mother, come,  
 And whisper up a porpoise from the  
 foam,  
 Because I want to ride."

Full slowly, then,  
 The mother rose, and ever kept her  
 eyes  
 Upon her little child. "You freakish  
 maid,"  
 Said she, "now mark me, if I call you  
 one,  
 You shall not scold nor make him take  
 you far."

"I only want — you know I only  
 want,"  
 The girl replied — "to go and play  
 awhile  
 Upon the sand by Lagos." Then she  
 turned  
 And muttered low, "Mother, is this  
 the girl  
 Who saw the island?" But the mo-  
 ther frowned.  
 "When may she go to it?" the  
 daughter asked.

And Gladys, following them, gave all  
her mind  
To hear the answer. "When she wills  
to go;  
For yonder comes to shore the ferry-  
boat."  
Then Gladys turned to look, and even  
so  
It was; a ferry-boat, and far away  
Reared in the offing, lo, the purple  
peaks  
Of her loved island.

Then she raised her arms,  
And ran toward the boat, crying out,  
"O rare,  
The island! fair befall the island; let  
Me reach the island." And she sprang  
on board,  
And after her stepped in the freakish  
maid  
And the fair mother, brooding o'er her  
child;  
And this one took the helm, and that  
let go  
The sail, and off they flew, and fur-  
rowed up  
A flaky hill before, and left behind  
A sobbing, snake-like tail of creamy  
foam;  
And dancing hither, thither, sometimes  
shot  
Toward the island; then, when Gladys  
looked,  
Were leaving it to leeward. And the  
maid  
Whistled a wind to come and rock the  
craft,  
And would be leaning down her head  
to mew  
At cat-fish, then lift out into her lap  
And dandle baby-seals, which, having  
kissed,  
She flung to their sleek mothers, till  
her own  
Rebuked her in good English, after  
cried,  
"Luff, luff, we shall be swamped."  
"I will not luff,"  
Sobbed the fair mischief; "you are  
cross to me."  
"For shame!" the mother shrieked;  
"luff, luff, my dear;

Kiss and be friends, and thou shalt have  
the fish  
With the curly tail to ride on." So she  
did,  
And presently, a dolphin bouncing  
up,  
She sprang upon his slippery back, —  
"Farewell,"  
She laughed, was off, and all the sea  
grew calm.

Then Gladys was much happier, and  
was 'ware  
In the smooth weather that this woman  
talked  
Like one in sleep, and murmured cer-  
tain thoughts  
Which seemed to be like echoes of her  
own.  
She nodded, "Yes, the girl is going  
now  
To her own island. Gladys poor? Not  
she!  
Who thinks so? Once I met a man in  
white,  
Who said to me, 'The thing that might  
have been  
Is called, and questioned why it hath  
not been;  
And can it give good reason, it is set  
Beside the actual, and reckoned in  
To fill the empty gaps of life.' Ah,  
so  
The possible stands by us ever fresh,  
Fairer than aught which any life hath  
owned,  
And makes divine amends. Now this  
was set  
Apart from kin, and not ordained a  
home;  
An equal; — and not suffered to fence  
in  
A little plot of earthly good, and say,  
'Tis mine; but in bereavement of the  
part,  
O, yet to taste the whole, — to under-  
stand  
The grandeur of the story, not to feel  
Satiated with good possessed, but ever-  
more  
A healthful hunger for the great idea,  
The beauty and the blessedness of  
life.

"Lo, now, the shadow!" quoth she,  
 breaking off,  
 "We are in the shadow." Then did  
 Gladys turn,  
 And, O, the mountain with the purple  
 peaks  
 Was close at hand. It cast a shadow  
 out,  
 And they were in it: and she saw the  
 snow,  
 And under that the rocks, and under  
 that  
 The pines, and then the pasturage;  
 and saw  
 Numerous dips, and undulations rare,  
 Running down seaward, all astir with  
 life  
 Long canes, and lofty feathers; for the  
 palms  
 And spice-trees of the south, nay, every  
 growth,  
 Meets in that island.

So that woman ran  
 The boat ashore, and Gladys set her  
 foot  
 Thereon. Then all at once much laugh-  
 ter rose;  
 Invisible folks set up exultant shouts,  
 "It all belongs to Gladys;" and she  
 ran  
 And hid herself among the nearest trees  
 And panted, shedding tears.

So she looked round,  
 And saw that she was in a banyan  
 grove,  
 Full of wild peacocks, — pecking on the  
 grass,  
 A flickering mass of eyes, blue, green,  
 and gold,  
 Or reaching out their jewelled necks,  
 where high  
 They sat in rows along the boughs. No  
 tree  
 Cumbered with creepers let the sun-  
 shine through,  
 But it was caught in scarlet cups, and  
 poured  
 From these on amber tufts of bloom,  
 and dropped  
 Lower on azure stars. The air was  
 still,

As if awaiting somewhat, or asleep,  
 And Gladys was the only thing that  
 moved,  
 Excepting — no, they were not birds —  
 what then?  
 Glorified rainbows with a living soul?  
 While they passed through a sunbeam  
 they were seen,  
 Not elsewhere, but they were present  
 yet  
 In shade. They were at work, pome-  
 granate fruit  
 That lay about removing, — purple  
 grapes,  
 That clustered in the path, clearing  
 aside.  
 Through a small spot of light would  
 pass and go  
 The glorious happy mouth and two fair  
 eyes  
 Of somewhat that made rustlings where  
 it went;  
 But when a beam would strike the  
 ground sheer down,  
 Behold them! they had wings, and they  
 would pass  
 One after other with the sheeny fans,  
 Bearing them slowly, that their hues  
 were seen,  
 Tender as russet crimson dropt on  
 snows,  
 Or where they turned flashing with gold  
 and dashed  
 With purple glooms. And they had  
 feet, but these  
 Did barely touch the ground. And they  
 took heed  
 Not to disturb the waiting quietness;  
 Nor rouse up fawns, that slept beside  
 their dams;  
 Nor the fair leopard, with her sleek  
 paws laid  
 Across her little drowsy cubs; nor  
 swans,  
 That, floating, slept upon a glassy  
 pool;  
 Nor rosy cranes, all slumbering in the  
 reeds,  
 With heads beneath their wings. For  
 this, you know,  
 Was Eden. She was passing through  
 the trees  
 That made a ring about it, and she  
 caught

A glimpse of glades beyond. All she  
 had seen  
 Was nothing to them ; but words are  
 not made  
 To tell that tale. No wind was let to  
 blow,  
 And all the doves were bidden to hold  
 their peace.  
 Why? One was working in a valley  
 near,  
 And none might look that way. It was  
 understood  
 That He had nearly ended that His  
 work ;  
 For two shapes met, and one to other  
 spake,  
 Accessing him with, " Prince, what  
 worketh He ?"  
 Who whispered, " Lo ! He fashioneth  
 red clay."  
 And all at once a little trembling stir  
 Was felt in the earth, and every creat-  
 ure woke,  
 And laid its head down, listening. It  
 was known  
 Then that the work was done ; the new-  
 made king  
 Had risen, and set his feet upon his  
 realm,  
 And it acknowledged him.

But in her path  
 Came some one that withstood her, and  
 he said,  
 " What doest thou here ?" Then she  
 did turn and flee,  
 Among those colored spirits, through  
 the grove,  
 Trembling for haste ; it was not well  
 with her  
 Till she came forth of those thick ban-  
 yan trees,  
 And set her feet upon the common  
 grass,  
 And felt the common wind.

Yet once beyond,  
 She could not choose but cast a back-  
 ward glance.  
 The lovely matted growth stood like a  
 wall,  
 And means of entering were not evi-  
 dent, —

The gap had closed. But Gladys  
 laughed for joy ;  
 She said, " Remoteness and a multi-  
 tude  
 Of years are counted nothing here.  
 Behold,  
 To-day I have been in Eden. O, it  
 blooms  
 In my own island."

And she wandered on,  
 Thinking, until she reached a place of  
 palms,  
 And all the earth was sandy where she  
 walked, —  
 Sandy and dry, — strewed with papy-  
 rus-leaves,  
 Old idols, rings and pottery, painted  
 lids  
 Of mummies (for perhaps it was the  
 way  
 That leads to dead old Egypt), and  
 withal  
 Excellent sunshine cut out sharp and  
 clear  
 The hot prone pillars, and the carven  
 plinths, —  
 Stone lotos cups, with petals dipped in  
 sand,  
 And wicked gods, and sphinxes bland,  
 who sat  
 And smiled upon the ruin. O, how  
 still !  
 Hot, blank, illuminated with the clear  
 Stare of an unveiled sky. The dry  
 stiff leaves  
 Of palm-trees never rustled, and the  
 soul  
 Of that dead ancients was itself  
 dead.  
 She was above her ankles in the sand,  
 When she beheld a rocky road, and,  
 lo !  
 It bare in it the ruts of chariot wheels,  
 Which erst had carried to their pagan  
 prayers  
 The brown old Pharaohs ; for the ruts  
 led on  
 To a great cliff, that either was a cliff  
 Or some dread shrine in ruins, —  
 partly reared  
 In front of that same cliff, and partly  
 hewn

Or excavate within its heart. Great  
 heaps  
 Of sand and stones on either side there  
 lay;  
 And, as the girl drew on, rose out from  
 each,  
 As from a ghostly kennel, gods unblest,  
 Dog-headed, and behind them winged  
 things  
 Like angels; and this carven multi-  
 tude  
 Hedged in, to right and left, the rocky  
 road.

At last, the cliff, — and in the cliff a  
 door  
 Yawning: and she looked in, as down  
 the throat  
 Of some stupendous giant, and beheld  
 No floor, but wide, worn flights of  
 steps, that led  
 Into a dimness. When the eyes could  
 bear  
 That change to gloom, she saw, flight  
 after flight,  
 Flight after flight, the worn, long stair  
 go down,  
 Smooth with the feet of nations dead  
 and gone.  
 So she did enter; also she went down  
 'Till it was dark, and yet again went  
 down,  
 Till, gazing upward at that yawning  
 door,  
 It seemed no larger, in its height re-  
 mote,  
 Than a pin's head. But while, irreso-  
 lute,  
 She doubted of the end, yet farther  
 down  
 A slender ray of lamplight fell away  
 Along the stair, as from a door ajar:  
 To this again she felt her way, and  
 stepped  
 Adown the hollow stair, and reached  
 the light;  
 But fear fell on her, fear; and she for-  
 bore  
 Entrance, and listened. Ay! 'twas  
 even so, —  
 A sigh; the breathing as of one who  
 slept  
 And was disturbed. So she drew back  
 awhile,

And trembled; then her doubting  
 hand she laid  
 Against the door, and pushed it; but  
 the light  
 Waned, faded, sank; and as she came  
 within —  
 Hark, hark! A spirit was it, and  
 asleep?  
 A spirit doth not breathe like clay.  
 There hung  
 A cresset from the roof, and thence ap-  
 peared  
 A flickering speck of light, and dis-  
 appeared;  
 Then dropped along the floor its elfish  
 flakes,  
 That fell on some one resting, in the  
 gloom, —  
 Somewhat, a spectral shadow, then a  
 shape  
 That loomed. It was a heifer, ay, and  
 white,  
 Breathing and languid through pro-  
 longed repose.

Was it a heifer? all the marble floor  
 Was milk-white also, and the cresset  
 paled,  
 And straight their whiteness grew con-  
 fused and mixed.

But when the cresset, taking heart,  
 bloomed out, —  
 The whiteness, — and asleep again!  
 but now  
 It was a woman, robed, and with a  
 face  
 Lovely and dim. And Gladys while  
 she gazed  
 Murmured, "O terrible! I am afraid  
 To breathe among these intermittent  
 lives,  
 That fluctuate in mystic solitude,  
 And change and fade. Lo! where the  
 goddess sits  
 Dreaming on her dim throne; a cres-  
 cent moon  
 She wears upon her forehead. Ah!  
 her frown  
 Is mournful, and her slumber is not  
 sweet.  
 What dost thou hold, Isis, to thy cold  
 breast?

A baby god with finger on his lips,  
 Asleep, and dreaming of departed  
     sway?  
 Thy son. Hush, hush; he knoweth  
     all the lore  
 And sorcery of old Egypt; but his  
     mouth  
 He shuts; the secret shall be lost with  
     him,  
 He will not tell."

The woman coming down!  
 "Child, what art doing here?" the  
     woman said;  
 "What wilt thou of Dame Isis and her  
     bairn?"  
*(Ay, ay, we see thee breathing in thy  
     shroud,—  
 Thy pretty shroud, all frilled and fur-  
     belowed.)*  
 The air is dim with dust of spiced  
     bones.  
 I mark a crypt down there. Tier upon  
     tier  
 Of painted coffers fills it. What if  
     we,  
 Passing, should slip, and crash into  
     their midst,—  
 Break the frail ancentry, and smoth-  
     ered lie,  
 Tumbled among the ribs of queens and  
     kings,  
 And all the gear they took to bed with  
     them!  
 Horrible! let us hence.

And Gladys said,  
 "O, they are rough to mount, those  
     stairs;" but she  
 Took her and laughed, and up the  
     mighty flight  
 Shot like a meteor with her. "There,"  
     said she;  
 "The light is sweet when one has  
     smelled of graves,  
 Down in unholy heathen gloom; fare-  
     well."  
 She pointed to a gateway, strong and  
     high,  
 Reared of hewn stones; but, look! in  
     lieu of gate,  
 There was a glittering cobweb drawn  
     across,

And on the lintel there were writ these  
     words:  
 "Ho, every one that cometh, I divide  
 What hath been from what might be,  
     and the line  
 Hangeth before thee as a spider's  
     web;  
 Yet, wouldst thou enter, thou must  
     break the line,  
 Or else forbear the hill."

The maiden said,  
 "So, cobweb, I will break thee." And  
     she passed  
 Among some oak-trees on the farther  
     side,  
 And waded through the bracken round  
     their bolls,  
 Until she saw the open, and drew on  
 Toward the edge o' the wood, where it  
     was mixed  
 With pines and heathery places wild  
     and fresh.  
 Here she put up a creature, that ran on  
 Before her, crying, "Tint, tint, tint,"  
     and turned,  
 Sat up, and stared at her with elfish  
     eyes,  
 Jabbering of gramarye, one Michael  
     Scott,  
 The wizard that wonned somewhere  
     underground,  
 With other talk enough to make one  
     fear  
 To walk in lonely places. After passed  
 A man-at-arms, William of Deloraine;  
 He shook his head, "An' if I list to  
     tell,"  
 Quoth he, "I know, but how it mat-  
     ters not;"  
 Then crossed himself, and muttered of  
     a clap  
 Of thunder, and a shape in Amice  
     gray,  
 But still it mouthed at him, and whim-  
     pered, "Tint,  
 Tint, tint." "There shall be wild  
     work some day soon,"  
 Quoth he, "thou limb of darkness: he  
     will come,  
 Thy master, push a hand up, catch  
     thee, imp,  
 And so good Christians shall have  
     peace, perdie."

Then Gladys was so frightened, that  
 she ran,  
 And got away, towards a grassy down,  
 Where sheep and lambs were feeding,  
 with a boy  
 To tend them. 'Twas the boy who  
 wears that herb  
 Called heart's-ease in his bosom, and  
 he sang  
 So sweetly to his flock, that she stole  
 on  
 Nearer to listen. "O Content, Con-  
 tent,  
 Give me," sang he, "thy tender com-  
 pany.  
 I feed my flock among the myrtles;  
 all  
 My lambs are twins, and they have laid  
 them down  
 Along the slopes of Beulah. Come,  
 fair love,  
 From the other side the river, where  
 their harps  
 Thou hast been helping them to tune.  
 O come,  
 And pitch thy tent by mine; let me  
 behold  
 Thy mouth, — that even in slumber  
 talks of peace, —  
 Thy well-set locks, and dove-like coun-  
 tenance."

And Gladys hearkened, couched upon  
 the grass,  
 Till she had rested; then did ask the  
 boy,  
 For it was afternoon, and she was fain  
 To reach the shore, "Which is the  
 path, I pray,  
 That leads one to the water?" But he  
 said,  
 "Dear lass, I only know the narrow  
 way,  
 The path that leads one to the golden  
 gate  
 Across the river." So she wandered  
 on;  
 And presently her feet grew cool, the  
 grass  
 Standing so high, and thyme being thick  
 and soft.  
 The air was full of voices, and the scent  
 Of mountain blossom loaded all its  
 wafts;

For she was on the slopes of a goodly  
 mount,  
 And reared in such a sort that it looked  
 down  
 Into the deepest valleys, darkest glades,  
 And richest plains o' the island. It  
 was set  
 Midway between the snows majestic  
 And a wide level, such as men would  
 choose  
 For growing wheat; and some one said  
 to her,  
 "It is the hill Parnassus." So she  
 walked  
 Yet on its lower slope, and she could  
 hear  
 The calling of an unseen multitude  
 To some upon the mountain, "Give us  
 more;"  
 And others said, "We are tired of this  
 old world:  
 Make it look new again." Then there  
 were some  
 Who answered lovingly — (the dead yet  
 speak  
 From that high mountain, as the living  
 do);  
 But others sang desponding, "We have  
 kept  
 The vision for a chosen few: we love  
 Fit audience better than a rough huzza  
 From the unreasoning crowd."

Then words came up:  
 "There was a time, you poets, was a  
 time  
 When all the poetry was ours, and  
 made  
 By some who climbed the mountain  
 from our midst.  
 We loved it then, we sang it in our  
 streets.  
 O, it grows obsolete! Be you as they:  
 Our heroes die and drop away from us;  
 Oblivion folds them 'neath her dusky  
 wing,  
 Fair copies wasted to the hungering  
 world.  
 Save them. We fall so low for lack of  
 them,  
 That many of us think scorn of honest  
 trade,  
 And take no pride in our own shops;  
 who care



Only to quit a calling, will not make  
 The calling what it might be : who  
     despise  
 Their work, Fate laughs at, and doth  
     let the work  
 Dull, and degrade them."

Then did Gladys smile :  
 "Heroes!" quoth she ; "yet, now I  
     think on it,  
 There was the jolly goldsmith, brave  
     Sir Hugh,  
 Certes, a hero ready-made. Methinks  
 I see him burnishing of golden gear,  
 Tankard and charger, and a-muttering  
     low,  
 'London is thirsty' — (then he weighs a  
     chain) :  
 'Tis an ill thing, my masters. I would  
     give  
 The worth of this, and many such as  
     this,  
 To bring it water."

"Ay, and after him  
 There came up Guy of London, lettered  
     son  
 O' the honest lighterman. I'll think  
     on him,  
 Leaning upon the bridge on summer  
     eves,  
 After his shop was closed : a still, grave  
     man,  
 With melancholy eyes. 'While these  
     are hale,'  
 He saith, when he looks down and  
     marks the crowd  
 Cheerily working ; where the river  
     marge  
 Is blocked with ships and boats ; and  
     all the wharves  
 Swarm, and the cranes swing in with  
     merchandise, —  
 'While these are hale, 'tis well, 'tis  
     very well.  
 But, O good Lord,' saith he, 'when  
     these are sick, —  
 I fear me, Lord, this excellent work-  
     manship  
 Of Thine is counted for a cumbrance  
     then.  
 Ay, ay, my hearties ! many a man of  
     you,

Struck down, or maimed, or fevered,  
     shrinks away,  
 And, mastered in that fight for lack of  
     aid,  
 Creeps shivering to a corner, and there  
     dies.'  
 Well, we have heard the rest.

"Ah, next I think  
 Upon the merchant captain, stout of  
     heart  
 To dare and to endure. 'Robert,' saith  
     he  
 (The navigator Knox to his manful  
     son),  
 'I sit a captive from the ship detained ;  
 This heathenry doth let thee visit her.  
 Remember, son, if thou, alas ! shouldst  
     fail  
 To ransom thy poor father, they are  
     free  
 As yet, the mariners ; have wives at  
     home,  
 As I have ; ay, and liberty is sweet  
 To all men. For the ship, she is not  
     ours,  
 Therefore, 'beseech thee, son, lay on  
     the mate  
 This my command, to leave me, and set  
     sail.  
 As for thyself —' 'Good father,' saith  
     the son ;  
 'I will not, father, ask your blessing  
     now,  
 Because, for fair, or else for evil, fate,  
 We two shall meet again.' And so they  
     did.  
 The dusky men, peeling off cinnamon,  
 And beating nutmeg clusters from the  
     tree,  
 Ransom and bribe contemned. The  
     good ship sailed, —  
 The son returned to share his father's  
     cell.

"O, there are many such. Would I  
     had wit  
 Their worth to sing !" With that, she  
     turned her feet.  
 "I am tired now," said Gladys, "of  
     their talk  
 Around this hill Parnassus." And, be-  
     hold,

A piteous sight, — an old, blind, gray-beard king  
 Led by a fool with bells. Now this was loved  
 Of the crowd below the hill ; and when he called  
 For his lost kingdom, and bewailed his age,  
 And plained on his unkind daughters, they were known  
 To say, that if the best of gold and gear  
 Could have bought him back his kingdom, and made kind  
 The hard hearts which had broken his erewhile,  
 They would have gladly paid it from their store,  
 Many times over. What is done is done,  
 No help. The ruined majesty passed on.  
 And, look you ! one who met her as she walked  
 Showed her a mountain nymph lovely as light.  
 Her name *Ænone* ; and she mourned and mourned,  
 "O Mother *Ida*," and she could not cease,  
 No, nor be comforted.

And after this,  
 Soon there came by, arrayed in Norman cap  
 And kirtle, an Arcadian villager,  
 Who said, "I pray you, have you chanced to meet  
 One *Gabriel*?" and she sighed ; but Gladys took  
 And kissed her hand : she could not answer her,  
 Because she guessed the end.

With that it drew  
 To evening ; and as Gladys wandered on  
 In the calm weather, she beheld the wave,  
 And she ran down to set her feet again  
 On the sea-margin, which was covered thick  
 With white shell-skeletons. The sky was red

As wine. The water played among bare ribs  
 Of many wrecks, that lay half-buried there  
 In the sand. She saw a cave, and moved thereto  
 To ask her way, and one so innocent  
 Came out to meet her, that, with marvelling mute,  
 She gazed and gazed into her sea-blue eyes,  
 For in them beamed the untaught ecstasy  
 Of childhood, that lives on though youth be come,  
 And love just born.

She could not choose but name her shipwrecked prince,  
 All blushing. She told Gladys many things  
 That are not in the story, — things, in sooth,  
 That Prospero her father knew. But [now  
 'Twas evening, and the sun dropped ; purple stripes  
 In the sea were copied from some clouds that lay  
 Out in the west. And lo ! the boat, and more,  
 The freakish thing to take fair Gladys home  
 She mowed at her, but Gladys took the helm :  
 "Peace, peace !" she said ; "be good : you shall not steer,  
 For I am your liege lady." Then she sang  
 The sweetest song she knew all the way home.

So Gladys set her feet upon the sand ;  
 While in the sunset glory died away  
 The peaks of that blest island.

"Fare you well,  
 My country, my own kingdom," then she said,  
 "Till I go visit you again, farewell."

She looked toward their house with whom she dwelt, —  
 The carriages were coming. Hastening up,

She was in time to meet them at the door,  
 And lead the sleepy little ones within;  
 And some were cross and shivered,  
 and her dames  
 Were weary and right hard to please;  
 but she  
 Felt like a beggar suddenly endowed  
 With a warm cloak to 'fend her from  
 the cold.  
 "For, come what will," she said, "I  
 had *to-day*.  
 There is an island."

## THE MORAL.

What is the moral? Let us think  
 awhile,  
 Taking the editorial *WE* to help,  
 It sounds respectable.

The moral; yes,  
 We always read, when any fable ends,  
 "Hence we may learn." A moral  
 must be found.  
 What do you think of this: "Hence  
 we may learn  
 That dolphins swim about the coast of  
 Wales,  
 And Admiralty maps should now be  
 drawn  
 By teacher-girls, because their sight is  
 keen,  
 And they can spy out islands." Will  
 that do?  
 No, that is far too plain, — too evident.

Perhaps a general moralizing vein —  
 (We know we have a happy knack that  
 way.  
 We have observed, moreover, that  
 young men  
 Are fond of good advice, and so are  
 girls;  
 Especially of that meandering kind  
 Which, winding on so sweetly, treats  
 of all  
 They ought to be and do and think and  
 wear,  
 As one may say, from creeds to com-  
 forters.

Indeed, we much prefer that sort our-  
 selves,  
 So soothing). Good, a moralizing vein:  
 That is the thing; but how to manage  
 it?

"Hence we may learn," if we be so  
 incined,  
 That life goes best with those who take  
 it best;  
 That wit can spin from work a golden  
 robe  
 To queen it in; that who can paint at  
 will  
 A private picture-gallery, should not  
 cry  
 For shillings that will let him in to  
 look  
 At some by others painted. Further-  
 more,  
 Hence we may learn, you poets — (*and  
 we count*  
*For poets all who ever felt that such  
 They were, and all who secretly have  
 known*  
*That such they-could be; ay, more-  
 over, all*  
*Who wind the robes of ideality  
 About the bareness of their lives, and  
 hang*  
*Comforting curtains, knit of fancy's  
 yarn,*  
*Nightly betwixt them and the frosty  
 world*), —  
 Hence we may learn, you poets, that  
 of all  
 We should be most content. The  
 earth is given  
 To us: we reign by virtue of a sense  
 Which lets us hear the rhythm of that  
 old verse,  
 The ring of that old tune whereto she  
 spins.  
 Humanity is given to us: we reign  
 By virtue of a sense which lets us in  
 To know its troubles ere they have been  
 told,  
 And take them home and lull them into  
 rest  
 With mournfullest music. Time is  
 given to us, —  
 Time past, time future. Who, good  
 sooth, beside  
 Have seen it well, have walked this  
 empty world

When she went steaming, and from  
pulpy hills  
Have marked the spurting of their  
flamy crowns?

Have not we seen the tabernacle  
pitched,  
And peered between the linen curtains,  
blue,  
Purple, and scarlet, at the dimness  
there,  
And, frightened, have not dared to look  
again?  
But, quaint antiquity! beheld, we  
thought,  
A chest that might have held the manna  
pot,  
And Aaron's rod that budded. Ay, we  
leaned  
Over the edge of Britain, while the fleet  
Of Cæsar loomed and neared; then,  
afterwards,  
We saw fair Venice looking at herself  
In the glass below her, while her Doge  
went forth  
In all his bravery to the wedding.

However, counts for nothing to the  
grace  
We wot of in time future: — therefore  
add,  
And afterwards have done: "*Hence  
we may learn,*"  
That though it be a grand and comely  
thing  
To be unhappy — (and we think it is,  
Because so many grand and clever  
folk  
Have found out reasons for unhappi-  
ness,  
And talked about uncomfortable  
things, —  
Low motives, bores, and shams, and  
hollowness,  
The hollowness o' the world, till we at  
last  
Have scarcely dared to jump or stamp,  
for fear,  
Being so hollow, it should break some  
day,  
And let us in), — yet, since we are not  
grand,

O, not at all, and as for cleverness,  
That may be or may not be, — it is well  
For us to be as happy as we can!

Agreed; and with a word to the nobler  
sex,  
As thus: We pray you carry not your  
guns  
On the full cock; we pray you set your  
pride  
In its proper place, and never be  
ashamed  
Of any honest calling, — let us add,  
And end: For all the rest, hold up your  
heads  
And mind your English.



## SONGS WITH PRELUDES.



## WEDLOCK.

THE sun was streaming in: I woke,  
and said,  
"Where is my wife, — that has been  
made my wife  
Only this year?" The casement stood  
ajar:  
I did but lift my head: The pear-tree  
dropped,  
The great white pear-tree dropped  
with dew from leaves  
And blossom, under heavens of happy  
blue.

My wife had wakened first, and had  
gone down  
Into the orchard. All the air was  
calm;  
Audible humming filled it. At the  
roots  
Of peony bushes lay in rose-red heaps,  
Or snowy, fallen bloom. The crag-like  
hills  
Were tossing down their silver messen-  
gers,  
And two brown foreigners, called cuck-  
oo-birds,

Gave them good answer : all things else  
were mute ;  
An idle world lay listening to their talk,  
They had it to themselves,

What ails my wife ?  
I know not if aught ails her ; though  
her step  
Tell of a conscious quiet, lest I wake.  
She moves atween the almond-boughs,  
and bends  
One thick with bloom to look on it.  
"O love !  
A little while thou hast withdrawn thy-  
self,  
At unaware to think thy thoughts  
alone :  
How sweet, and yet pathetic to my  
heart  
The reason. Ah ! thou art no more  
thine own.  
Mine, mine, O love ! Tears gather  
'neath my lids, —  
Sorrowful tears for thy lost liberty,  
Because it was so sweet. Thy liberty,  
That yet, O love, thou wouldst not  
have again.  
No ; all is right. But who can give, or  
bless,  
Or take a blessing, but there comes  
withal  
Some pain ?"

She walks beside the lily bed,  
And holds apart her gown ; she would  
not hurt  
The leaf-enclosed buds, that have not  
looked  
Yet on the daylight. O, thy locks are  
brown, —  
Fairest of colors ! — and a darker brown  
The beautiful, dear, veiled, modest  
eyes.  
A bloom as of blush-roses covers her  
Forehead, and throat, and cheek.  
Health breathes with her,  
And graceful vigor. Fair and wondrous  
soul !  
To think that thou art mine !

My wife came in,  
And moved into the chamber. As for  
me,

I heard, but lay as one that nothing  
hears,  
And feigned to be asleep.

## I.

The racing river leaped and sang  
Full blithely in the perfect weather,  
All round the mountain echoes rang,  
For blue and green were glad to-  
gether.

## II.

This rained out light from every part,  
And that with songs of joy was  
thrilling ;  
But, in the hollow of my heart,  
There ached a place that wanted  
filling.

## III.

Before the road and river meet,  
And stepping-stones are wet and  
glisten,  
I heard a sound of laughter sweet,  
And paused to like it, and to listen.

## IV.

I heard the chanting waters flow,  
The cushat's note, the bee's low  
humming, —  
Then turned the hedge, and did not  
know —  
How could I ? — that my time was  
coming.

## V.

A girl upon the highest stone,  
Half doubtful of the deed, was stand-  
ing,  
So far the shallow flood had flown  
Beyond the 'customed leap of land-  
ing.

## VI.

She knew not any need of me,  
Yet me she waited all unweeeting ;  
We thought not I had crossed the sea,  
And half the sphere to give her meet-  
ing.

## VII.

I waded out, her eyes I met,  
 I wished the moments had been  
 hours;  
 I took her in my arms, and set  
 Her dainty feet among the flowers.

## VIII.

Her fellow-maids in copse and lane,  
 Ah! still, methinks, I hear them  
 calling;  
 The wind's soft whisper in the plain,  
 The cushat's coo, the water's falling.

## IX.

But now it is a year ago,  
 But now possession crowns endeavor;  
 I took her in my heart, to grow  
 And fill the hollow place forever.

## REGRET.

O THAT WORD REGRET!  
 There have been nights and morns  
 when we have sighed,  
 "Let us alone, Regret! We are content  
 To throw thee all our past, so thou wilt  
 sleep  
 For aye." But it is patient, and it  
 wakes;  
 It hath not learned to cry itself to sleep,  
 But plaineth on the bed that it is hard.

We did amiss when we did wish it gone  
 And over: sorrows humanize our race;  
 Tears are the showers that fertilize this  
 world;  
 And memory of things precious keepeth  
 warm  
 The heart that once did hold them.

They are poor  
 That have lost nothing; they are  
 poorer far  
 Who, losing, have forgotten; they  
 most poor  
 Of all, who lose and wish they MIGHT  
 forget.

For life is one, and in its warp and  
 woof  
 There runs a thread of gold that glitters  
 fair,  
 And sometimes in the pattern shows  
 most sweet  
 Where there are sombre colors. It is  
 true  
 That we have wept. But O! this  
 thread of gold,  
 We would not have it tarnish; let us  
 turn  
 Oft and look back upon the wondrous  
 web,  
 And when it shineth sometimes we  
 shall know  
 That memory is possession.

## I.

When I remember something which I  
 had,  
 But which is gone, and I must do  
 without,  
 I sometimes wonder how I can be glad,  
 Even in cowslip time when hedges  
 sprout;  
 It makes me sigh to think on it, — but  
 yet  
 My days will not be better days, should  
 I forget.

## II.

When I remember something promised  
 me,  
 But which I never had, nor can have  
 now,  
 Because the promiser we no more see  
 In countries that accord with mortal  
 vow;  
 When I remember this, I mourn, —  
 but yet  
 My happier days are not the days when  
 I forget.

## LAMENTATION.

I READ upon that book,  
 Which down the golden gulf doth let  
 us look  
 On the sweet days of pastoral majesty;  
 I read upon that book

How, when the Shepherd Prince did  
flee

(Red Esau's twin), he desolate took  
The stone for a pillow: then he fell on  
sleep.

And lo! there was a ladder. Lo!  
there hung

A ladder from the star-place, and it  
clung

To the earth: it tied her so to heaven;  
and O!

There fluttered wings;  
Then were ascending and descending  
things

That stepped to him where he lay  
low;

Then up the ladder would a-drifting go  
(This feathered brood of heaven), and  
show

Small as white flakes in winter that are  
blown

Together, underneath the great white  
throne.

When I had shut the book, I said:  
"Now, as for me, my dreams upon my  
bed

Are not like Jacob's dream;  
Yet I have got it in my life; yes, I,  
And many more: it doth not us be-  
seem,

Therefore, to sigh.  
Is there not hung a ladder in our sky?  
Yea; and, moreover, all the way up  
on high

Is thickly peopled with the prayers of  
men.

We have no dream! What then?  
Like winged wayfarers the height they  
scale

(By Him that offers them they shall  
prevail)—

The prayers of men.

But where is found a prayer for me;  
How should I pray?

My heart is sick, and full of strife.  
I heard one whisper with departing  
breath,

'Suffer us not, for any pains of death,  
To fall from Thee.' [life!

But O, the pains of life! the pains of  
There is no comfort now, and naught  
to win,

But yet, — I will begin."

## I.

"Preserve to me my wealth," I do not  
say,

For that is wasted away;  
And much of it was cankered ere it  
went.

"Preserve to me my health," I cannot  
say,

For that, upon a day,  
Went after other delights to banish-  
ment.

## II.

What can I pray? "Give me forget-  
fulness"?

No, I would still possess  
Past away smiles, though present  
fronts be stern.

"Give me again my kindred"? Nay;  
not so,

Not idle prayers. We know  
They that have crossed the river can-  
not return.

## III.

I do not pray, "Comfort me! comfort  
me!"

For how should comfort be?  
O — O that cooing mouth, — that little  
white head!

No; but I pray, "If it be not too late,  
Open to me the gate,  
That I may find my babe when I am  
dead.

## IV.

"Show me the path. I had forgotten  
Thee

When I was happy and free,  
Walking down here in the gladsome  
light o' the sun;

But now I come and mourn; O set my  
feet

In the road to Thy blest seat,  
And for the rest, O God, Thy will be  
done."

## DOMINION.

WHEN found the rose delight in her  
fair hue?

Color is nothing to this world; 'tis I

That see it. Farther, I discover soul,  
That trees are nothing to their fellow-  
trees ;

It is but I that love their stateliness,  
And I that, comforting my heart, do  
sit

At noon beneath their shadow. I will  
step

On the ledges of this world, for it is  
mine ;

But the other world ye wot of shall go  
too ;

I will carry it in my bosom. O my  
world,

That was not built with clay !

Consider it  
(This outer world we tread on) as a  
harp, —

A gracious instrument on whose fair  
strings

We learn those airs we shall be set to  
play

When mortal hours are ended. Let  
the wings,

Man, of thy spirit move on it as wind,  
And draw forth melody. Why shouldst  
thou yet

Lie grovelling? More is won than e'er  
was lost :

Inherit. Let thy day be to thy night  
A teller of good tidings. Let thy  
praise

Go up as birds go up that, when they  
wake,

Shake off the dew and soar.

So take Joy home,  
And make a place in thy great heart for  
her,

And give her time to grow, and cherish  
her ;

Then will she come, and oft will sing  
to thee,

When thou art working in the furrows ;  
ay,

Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.  
It is a comely fashion to be glad, —

Joy is the grace we say to God.

There is a rest remaining. Art tired?  
sinned? Hast thou

There is a Sacrifice. Lift up thy head,  
The lovely world, and the over-world  
alike,

Ring with a song eterne, a happy rede,  
"THY FATHER LOVES THEE."

## I.

Yon moored mackerel fleet  
Hangs thick as a swarm of bees,  
Or a clustering village street  
Foundationless built on the seas.

## II.

The mariners ply their craft,  
Each set in his castle frail ;  
His care is all for the draught,  
And he dries the rain-beaten sail.

## III.

For rain came down in the night,  
And thunder muttered full oft,  
But now the azure is bright,  
And hawks are wheeling aloft.

## IV.

I take the land to my breast,  
In her coat with daisies fine ;  
For me are the hills in their best,  
And all that's made is mine.

## V.

Sing high! "Though the red sun dip,  
There yet is a day for me ;  
Nor youth I count for a ship  
That long ago foundered at sea.

## VI.

"Did the lost love die and depart?  
Many times since we have met ;  
For I hold the years in my heart,  
And all that was — is yet.

## VII.

"I grant to the king his reign ;  
Let us yield him homage due ;  
But over the lands there are twain,  
O king, I must rule as you.



## VIII.

"I grant to the wise his meed,  
But his yoke I will not brook,  
For God taught me to read, —  
He lent me the world for a book."

## FRIENDSHIP.

ON A SUN-PORTRAIT OF HER HUSBAND,  
SENT BY HIS WIFE TO THEIR FRIEND.

BEAUTIFUL eyes, — and shall I see no  
more  
The living thought when it would leap  
from them,  
And play in all its sweetness 'neath  
their lids?

Here was a man familiar with fair  
heights  
That poets climb. Upon his peace the  
tears  
And troubles of our race deep inroads  
made,  
Yet life was sweet to him; he kept his  
heart  
At home. Who saw his wife might  
well have thought —  
"God loves this man. He chose a wife  
for him —  
The true one!" O sweet eyes, that  
seem to live,  
I know so much of you, tell me the  
rest!  
Eyes full of fatherhood and tender  
care  
For small, young children. Is a mes-  
sage here  
That you would fain have sent, but had  
not time?  
If such there be, I promise, by long  
love  
And perfect friendship, by all trust that  
comes  
Of understanding, that I will not fail,  
No, nor delay to find it.

O, my heart  
Will often pain me as for some strange  
fault, —

Some grave defect in nature, — when I  
think  
How I, delighted, 'neath those olive-  
trees,  
Moved to the music of the tideless  
main,  
While, with sore weeping, in an island  
home  
They laid that much-loved head be-  
neath the sod,  
And I did not know.

## I.

I stand on the bridge where last we  
stood  
When delicate leaves were young;  
The children called us from yonder  
wood,  
While a mated blackbird sung.

## II.

Ah, yet you call, — in your gladness  
call, —  
And I hear your pattering feet;  
It does not matter, matter at all,  
You fatherless children sweet, —

## III.

It does not matter at all to you,  
Young hearts that pleasure besets;  
The father sleeps, but the world is new,  
The child of his love forgets.

## IV.

I too, it may be, before they drop,  
The leaves that flicker to-day,  
Ere bountiful gleams make ripe the  
crop,  
Shall pass from my place away:

## V.

Ere yon gray cygnet puts on her white,  
Or snow lies soft on the wold,  
Shall shut these eyes on the lovely  
light,  
And leave the story untold.

## VI.

Shall I tell it there? Ah, let that be,  
 For the warm pulse beats so high;  
 To love to-day, and to breathe and  
 see, —  
 To-morrow perhaps to die, —

## VII.

Leave it with God. But this I have  
 known,  
 That sorrow is over soon;  
 Some in dark nights, sore weeping  
 alone,  
 Forget by full of the moon.

## VIII.

But if all loved, as the few can love,  
 This world would seldom be well;  
 And who need wish, if he dwells above,  
 For a deep, a long death-knell.

## IX.

There are four or five, who, passing  
 this place,  
 While they live will name me yet;  
 And when I am gone will think on my  
 face,  
 And feel a kind of regret.



## WINSTANLEY.

## THE APOLOGY.

*Quoth the cedar to the reeds and  
 rushes,  
 "Water-grass, you know not what  
 I do;  
 Know not of my storms, nor of my  
 hushes,  
 And — I know not you."*

*Quoth the reeds and rushes, "Wind!  
 O waken!  
 Breathe, O wind, and set our an-  
 swer free,  
 For we have no voice, of you forsaken,  
 For the cedar-tree."*

*Quoth the earth at midnight to the  
 ocean,  
 "Wilderness of water, lost to view,  
 Naught you are to me but sounds of  
 motion;  
 I am naught to you."*

*Quoth the ocean, "Dawn! O fairest,  
 clearest,  
 Touch me with thy golden fingers  
 bland;  
 For I have no smile till thou appearest  
 For the lovely land."*

*Quoth the hero dying, whelmed in  
 glory,  
 "Many blame me, few have under-  
 stood;  
 Ah, my folk, to you I leave a story, —  
 Make its meaning good."*

*Quoth the folk, "Sing, poet! teach us,  
 prove us;  
 Surely we shall learn the meaning  
 then;  
 Wound us with a pain divine, O  
 move us,  
 For this man of men."*

WINSTANLEY'S deed, you kindly folk,  
 With it I fill my lay,  
 And a nobler man ne'er walked the  
 world,  
 Let his name be what it may.

The good ship "Snowdrop" tarried  
 long,  
 Up at the vane looked he;  
 "Belike," he said, for the wind had  
 dropped,  
 "She lieth becalmed at sea."

The lovely ladies flocked within,  
 And still would each one say,  
 "Good mercer, be the ships come up?"  
 But still he answered, "Nay."

Then stepped two mariners down the  
 street,  
 With looks of grief and fear:  
 "Now, if Winstanley be your name,  
 We bring you evil cheer!

"For the good ship 'Snowdrop' struck,  
— she struck  
On the rock, — the Eddystone,  
And down she went with threescore  
men,  
We two being left alone.

"Down in the deep, with freight and  
crew,  
Past any help she lies,  
And never a bale has come to shore  
Of all thy merchandise."

"For cloth o' gold and comely frieze,"  
Winstanley said, and sighed,  
"For velvet coif, or costly coat,  
They fathoms deep may bide.

"O thou brave skipper, blithe and  
kind,  
O mariners, bold and true,  
Sorry at heart, right sorry am I,  
A-thinking of yours and you.

"Many long days Winstanley's breast  
Shall feel a weight within,  
For a waft of wind he shall be 'feared  
And trading count but sin.

"To him no more it shall be joy  
To pace the cheerful town,  
And see the lovely ladies gay  
Step on in velvet gown."

The "Snowdrop" sank at Lammas  
tide,  
All under the yeasty spray;  
On Christmas Eve the brig "Content"  
Was also cast away.

He little thought o' New Year's night,  
So jolly as he sat then,  
While drank the toast and praised the  
roast  
The round-faced Aldermen, —

While serving-lads ran to and fro,  
Pouring the ruby wine,  
And jellies trembled on the board,  
And towering pasties fine, —

While loud huzzas ran up the roof  
Till the lamps did rock o'erhead,  
And holly-boughs from rafters hung  
Dropped down their berries red, —

He little thought on Plymouth Hoe,  
With every rising tide,  
How the wave washed in his sailor  
lads,  
And laid them side by side.

There stepped a stranger to the board:  
"Now, stranger, who be ye?"  
He looked to right, he looked to left,  
And "Rest you merry," quoth he;

"For you did not see the brig go down,  
Or ever a storm had blown;  
For you did not see the white wave  
rear  
At the rock, — the Eddystone.

"She drave at the rock with sternsails  
set;  
Crash went the masts in twain;  
She staggered back with her mortal  
blow,  
Then leaped at it again.

"There rose a great cry, bitter and  
strong,  
The misty moon looked out!  
And the water swarmed with seamen's  
heads,  
And the wreck was strewed about.

"I saw her mainsail lash the sea  
As I clung to the rock alone;  
Then she heeled over, and down she  
went,  
And sank like any stone.

"She was a fair ship, but all's one!  
For naught could bide the shock."  
"I will take horse," Winstanley said,  
"And see this deadly rock;

"For never again shall bark o'mine  
Sail over the windy sea,  
Unless, by the blessing of God, for this  
Be found a remedy."

Winstanley rode to Plymouth town  
 All in the sheet and the snow,  
 And he looked around on shore and  
 sound  
 As he stood on Plymouth Hoe,

Till a pillar of spray rose far away,  
 And shot up its stately head,  
 Reared and fell over, and reared again :  
 "'Tis the rock! the rock!" he said.

Straight to the Mayor he took his way,  
 "Good Master Mayor," quoth he,  
 "I am a mercer of London town,  
 And owner of vessels three, —

"But for your rock of dark renown,  
 I had five to track the main."  
 "You are one of many," the old Mayor  
 said,  
 "That on the rock complain.

"An ill rock, mercer! your words ring  
 right,  
 Well with my thoughts they chime,  
 For my two sons to the world to come  
 It sent before their time."

"Lend me a lighter, good Master  
 Mayor,  
 And a score of shipwrights free,  
 For I think to raise a lantern tower  
 On this rock o' destiny."

The old Mayor laughed, but sighed  
 also;  
 "Ah, youth," quoth he, "is rash;  
 Sooner, young man, thou'lt root it out  
 From the sea that doth it lash.

"Who sails too near its jagged teeth,  
 He shall have evil lot;  
 For the calmest seas that tumble there  
 Froth like a boiling pot.

"And the heavier seas few look on  
 nigh,  
 But straight they lay him dead;  
 A seventy-gun-ship, sir! — they'll  
 shoot  
 Higher than her mast-head.

"O, beacons sighted in the dark,  
 They are right welcome things,  
 And pitchpots flaming on the shore  
 Show fair as angel wings.

"Hast gold in hand? then light the  
 land,  
 It 'longs to thee and me;  
 But let alone the deadly rock  
 In God Almighty's sea."

Yet said he, "Nay, — I must away,  
 On the rock to set my feet;  
 My debts are paid, my will I made,  
 Or ever I did thee greet.

"If I must die, then let me die  
 By the rock and not elsewhere;  
 If I may live, O let me live  
 To mount my lighthouse stair."

The old Mayor looked him in the face,  
 And answered: "Have thy way;  
 Thy heart is stout, as if round about  
 It was braced with an iron stay:

"Have thy will, mercer! choose thy  
 men,  
 \*Put off from the storm-rid shore;  
 God with thee be, or I shall see  
 Thy face and theirs no more."

Heavily plunged the breaking wave,  
 And foam flew up the lea,  
 Morning and even the drifted snow  
 Fell into the dark gray sea.

Winstanley chose him men and gear;  
 He said, "My time I waste,"  
 For the seas ran seething up the shore,  
 And the wrack drave on in haste.

But twenty days he waited and more,  
 Pacing the strand alone,  
 Or ever he set his manly foot  
 On the rock, — the Eddystone.

Then he and the sea began their strife,  
 And worked with power and might:  
 Whatever the man reared up by day  
 The sea broke down by night.

He wrought at ebb with bar and beam,  
 He sailed to shore at flow ;  
 And at his side, by that same tide,  
 Came bar and beam alsó.

"Give in, give in," the old Mayor cried,  
 "Or thou wilt rue the day."  
 "Yonder he goes," the townfolk  
 sighed,  
 "But the rock will have its way.

"For all his looks that are so stout,  
 And his speeches brave and fair,  
 He may wait on the wind, wait on the  
 wave,  
 But he'll build no lighthouse there."

In fine weather and foul weather  
 The rock his arts did flout,  
 Through the long days and the short  
 days,  
 Till all that year ran out.

With fine weather and foul weather  
 Another year came in :  
 "To take his wage," the workmen said,  
 "We almost count a sin."

Now March was gone, came April in,  
 And a sea-fog settled down,  
 And forth sailed he on a glassy sea,  
 He sailed from Plymouth town.

With men and stores he put to sea,  
 As he was wont to do ;  
 They showed in the fog like ghosts full  
 faint, —  
 A ghostly craft and crew.

And the sea-fog lay and waxed away,  
 For a long eight days and more ;  
 "God help our men," quoth the women  
 then ;  
 "For they bide long from shore."

They paced the Hoe in doubt and  
 dread :  
 "Where may our mariners be ?"  
 But the brooding fog lay soft as down  
 Over the quiet sea.

A Scottish schooner made the port,  
 The thirteenth day at e'en :  
 "As I am a man," the captain cried,  
 "A strange sight I have seen :

"And a strange sound heard, my mas-  
 ters all,  
 At sea, in the fog and the rain,  
 Like shipwrights' hammers tapping  
 low,  
 Then loud, then low again.

"And a stately house one instant  
 showed,  
 Through a rift, on the vessel's lee ;  
 What manner of creatures may be those  
 That build upon the sea ?"

Then sighed the folk, "The Lord be  
 praised !"  
 And they flocked to the shore amain ;  
 All over the Hoe, that livelong night,  
 Many stood out in the rain.

It ceased, and the red sun reared his  
 head,  
 And the rolling fog did flee ;  
 And, lo ! in the offing faint and far  
 Winstanley's house at sea !

In fair weather with mirth and cheer  
 The stately tower uprose ;  
 In foul weather, with hunger and cold,  
 'They were content to close ;

Till up the stair Winstanley went,  
 To fire the wick afar ;  
 And Plymouth in the silent night  
 Looked out, and saw her star.

Winstanley set his foot ashore :  
 Said he, "My work is done ;  
 I hold it strong to last as long  
 As aught beneath the sun.

"But if it fail, as fail it may,  
 Borne down with ruin and rout,  
 Another than I shall rear it high,  
 And brace the girders stout.

"A better than I shall rear it high,  
 For now the way is plain,  
 And though I were dead," Winstanley  
 said,  
 "The light would shine again.

"Yet, were I fain still to remain,  
 Watch in my tower to keep,  
 And tend my light in the stormiest  
 night  
 That ever did move the deep ;

"And if it stood, why, then 'twere  
 good,  
 Amid their tremulous stirs,  
 To count each stroke, when the mad  
 waves broke,  
 For cheers of mariners.

"But if it fell, then this were well,  
 That I should with it fall ;  
 Since, for my part, I have built my  
 heart  
 In the courses of its wall.

"Ay ! I were fain, long to remain,  
 Watch in my tower to keep,  
 And tend my light in the stormiest  
 night  
 That ever did move the deep."

With that Winstanley went his way,  
 And left the rock renowned,  
 And summer and winter his pilot star  
 Hung bright o'er Plymouth Sound.

But it fell out, fell out at last,  
 That he would put to sea,  
 To scan once more his lighthouse tower  
 On the rock o' destiny.

And the winds broke, and the storm  
 broke,  
 And wrecks came plunging in ;  
 None in the town that night lay down  
 Or sleep or rest to win.

The great mad waves were rolling  
 graves,  
 And each flung up its dead ;  
 The seething flow was white below,  
 And black the sky o'erhead.

And when the dawn, the dull, gray  
 dawn,  
 Broke on the trembling town,  
 And men looked south to the harbor  
 mouth,  
 The lighthouse tower was down, —

Down in the deep where he doth sleep  
 Who made it shine afar,  
 And then in the night that drowned its  
 light,  
 Set, with his pilot star.

Many fair tombs in the glorious  
 glooms  
 At Westminster they show ;  
 The brave and the great lie there in  
 state :  
 Winstanley lieth low.

THE  
MONITIONS OF THE UNSEEN,  
AND  
*POEMS OF LOVE AND CHILDHOOD.*





# THE MONITIONS OF THE UNSEEN.

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## THE MONITIONS OF THE UNSEEN.

THERE are who give themselves to  
work for men, —  
To raise the lost, to gather orphaned  
babes  
And teach them, pitying of their mean  
estate,  
To feel for misery, and to look on  
crime  
With ruth, till they forget that they  
themselves  
Are of the race, themselves among the  
crowd  
Under the sentence and outside the  
gate,  
And of the family and in the doom.  
Cold is the world; they feel how cold  
it is,  
And wish that they could warm it.  
Hard is life  
For some. They would that they could  
soften it;  
And, in the doing of their work, they  
sigh  
As if it was their choice and not their  
lot;  
And, in the raising of their prayer to  
God,  
They crave His kindness for the world  
He made,  
Till they, at last, forget that He, not  
they,  
Is the true lover of man.

---

Now, in an ancient town, that had  
sunk low, —  
Trade having drifted from it, while  
there stayed  
Too many, that it erst had fed, be-  
hind, —  
There walked a curate once, at early  
day.

It was the summer-time; but summer  
air  
Came never, in its sweetness, down that  
dark  
And crowded alley, — never reached  
the door  
Whereat he stopped, — the sordid,  
shattered door.

He paused, and, looking right and left,  
beheld  
Dirt and decay, the lowering tenements  
That leaned toward each other; bro-  
ken panes  
Bulging with rags, and grim with old  
neglect;  
And reeking hills of formless refuse,  
heaped  
To fade and fester in a stagnant air.  
But he thought nothing of it: he had  
learned  
To take all wretchedness for granted, —  
he,  
Reared in a stainless home, and radi-  
ant yet  
With the clear hues of healthful Eng-  
lish youth,

Had learned to kneel by beds forlorn,  
 and stoop  
 Under foul lintels. He could touch,  
 with hand  
 Unshrinking, fevered fingers ; he could  
 hear  
 The language of the lost, in haunt and  
 den, —  
 So dismal, that the coldest passer-by  
 Must needs be sorry for them, and,  
 albeit  
 They cursed, would dare to speak no  
 harder words  
 Than these, — “ God help them ! ”

Ay! a learned man

The curate in all woes that plague man-  
 kind, —  
 Too learned, for he was but young.  
 His heart  
 Had yearned till it was overstrained,  
 and now  
 He — plunged into a narrow slough  
 unblest,  
 Had struggled with its deadly waters,  
 till  
 His own head had gone under, and he  
 took  
 Small joy in work he could not look to  
 aid  
 Its cleansing.

Yet, by one right tender tie,  
 Hope held him yet. The fathers coarse  
 and dull,  
 Vile mothers hard, and boys and girls  
 profane,  
 His soul drew back from. He had  
 worked for them, —  
 Work without joy : but, in his heart of  
 hearts,  
 He loved the little children ; and,  
 whene'er  
 He heard their prattle innocent, and  
 heard  
 Their tender voices lisping sacred  
 words  
 That he had taught them, — in the  
 cleanly calm  
 Of decent school, by decent matron  
 held, —  
 Then would he say, “ I shall have  
 pleasure yet,  
 In these.”

But now, when he pushed back that  
 door,  
 And mounted up a flight of ruined  
 stairs,  
 He said not that. He said, “ Oh!  
 once I thought  
 The little children would make bright  
 for me  
 The crown they wear who have won  
 many souls  
 For righteousness ; but oh, this evil  
 place !  
 Hard lines it gives them, cold and dirt  
 abhorred, —  
 Hunger and nakedness, in lieu of love,  
 And blows instead of care.

And so they die,

The little children that I love, — they  
 die, —  
 They turn their wistful faces to the  
 wall,  
 And slip away to God.”

With that, his hand

He laid upon a latch and lifted it,  
 Looked in full quietly, and entered  
 straight.

What saw he there ? He saw a three-  
 years child,  
 That lay a-dying on a wisp of straw  
 Swept up into a corner. O'er its brow  
 The damps of death were gathering :  
 all alone,  
 Uncared for, save that by its side was  
 set  
 A cup, it waited. And the eyes had  
 ceased  
 To look on things at hand. He thought  
 they gazed  
 In wistful wonder, or some faint sur-  
 mise  
 Of coming change, — as though they  
 saw the gate  
 Of that fair land that seems to most of  
 us  
 Very far off.

When he beheld the look,

He said, “ I knew, I knew how this  
 would be !  
 Another ! Ay, and but for drunken  
 blows

And dull forgetfulness of infant need,  
This little one had lived." And there-  
upon

The misery of it wrought upon him so,  
That, unaware, he wept. Oh! then it  
was

That, in the bending of his manly  
head,

It came between the child and that  
whereon

He gazed, and, when the curate glanced  
again,

Those dying eyes, drawn back to earth  
once more,

Looked up into his own, and smiled.

He drew

More near, and kneeled beside the  
small frail thing,

Because the lips were moving; and it  
raised

Its baby hand, and stroked away his  
tears,

And whispered, "Master! master!"  
and so died.

Now, in that town there was an ancient  
church,

A minster of old days which these had  
turned

To parish uses: there the curate served.  
It stood within a quiet swarded Close,

Sunny and still, and, though it was not  
far

From those dark courts where poor  
humanity

Struggled and swarmed, it seemed to  
wear its own

Still atmosphere about it, and to hold  
That old-world calm within its pre-  
cincts pure

And that grave rest which modern life  
foregoes.

When the sad curate, rising from his  
knees,

Looked from the dead to heaven, —  
as, unaware,

Men do when they would track de-  
parted life, —

He heard the deep tone of the minster-  
bell

Sounding for service, and he turned  
away

So heavy at heart, that, when he left  
behind

That dismal habitation, and came out  
In the clear sunshine of the minster-  
yard,

He never marked it. Up the aisle he  
moved,

With his own gloom about him; then  
came forth,

And read before the folk grand words  
and calm, —

Words full of hope; but into his dull  
heart

Hope came not. As one talketh in a  
dream,

And doth not mark the sense of his  
own words,

He read; and, as one walketh in a  
dream,

He after walked toward the vestment-  
room,

And never marked the way he went by,  
— no,

Nor the gray verger that before him  
stood,

The great church-keys depending from  
his hand,

Ready to follow him out and lock the  
door.

At length, aroused to present things,  
but not

Content to break the sequence of his  
thought,

Nor ready for the working day that  
held

Its busy course without, he said,  
"Good friend,

Leave me the keys: I would remain  
awhile."

And, when the verger gave, he moved  
with him

Toward the door distraught, then shut  
him out,

And locked himself within the church  
alone.

The minster-church was like a great  
brown cave,

Fluted and fine with pillars, and all  
dim

With glorious gloom; but, as the  
curate turned,

Suddenly shone the sun, — and roof  
and walls,

Also the clustering shafts from end to end,  
 Were thickly sown all over, as it were,  
 With seedling rainbows. And it went  
 and came  
 And went, that sunny beam, and  
 drifted up  
 Ethereal bloom to flush the open wings  
 And carven cheeks of dimpled cheru-  
 bim,  
 And dropped upon the curate as he  
 passed,  
 And covered his white raiment and his  
 hair.

Then did look down upon him from  
 their place,  
 High in the upper lights, grave mitred  
 priests,  
 And grand old monarchs in their  
 flowered gowns  
 And capes of miniver; and therewithal  
 (A veiling cloud gone by) the naked  
 sun  
 Smote with his burning splendor all  
 the pile,  
 And in there rushed, through half-  
 translucent panes,  
 A sombre glory as of rusted gold,  
 Deep ruby stains, and tender blue and  
 green,  
 That made the floor a beauty and de-  
 light,  
 Strewed as with phantom blossoms,  
 sweet enough  
 To have been wafted there the day  
 they dropt  
 On the flower-beds in heaven.

The curate passed  
 Adown the long south aisle, and did  
 not think  
 Upon this beauty, nor that he him-  
 self —  
 Excellent in the strength of youth, and  
 fair  
 With all the majesty that noble work  
 And stainless manners give — did add  
 his part  
 To make it fairer.

In among the knights  
 That lay with hands uplifted, by the  
 lute

And palm of many a saint, — 'neath  
 capitals  
 Whereon our fathers had been bold to  
 carve  
 With earthly tools their ancient child-  
 like dream  
 Concerning heavenly fruit and living  
 bowers,  
 And glad full-throated birds that sing  
 up there  
 Among the branches of the tree of  
 life, —  
 Through all the ordered forest of the  
 shafts,  
 Shooting on high to enter into light,  
 That swam aloft, — he took his silent  
 way,  
 And in the southern transept sat him  
 down,  
 Covered his face, and thought.

He said, "No pain,  
 No passion, and no aching, heart o'  
 mine,  
 Doth stir within thee. Oh! I would  
 there did:  
 Thou art so dull, so tired. I have lost  
 I know not what. I see the heavens  
 as lead:  
 They tend no whither. Ah! the  
 world is bared  
 Of her enchantment now: she is but  
 earth  
 And water. And, though much hath  
 passed away,  
 There may be more to go. I may for-  
 get  
 The joy and fear that have been:  
 there may live  
 No more for me the fervency of hope  
 Nor the arrest of wonder.

"Once I said,  
 'Content will wait on work, though  
 work appear  
 Unfruitful.' Now I say, 'Where is  
 the good?  
 What is the good?' A lamp when it  
 is lit  
 Must needs give light; but I am like a  
 man  
 Holding his lamp in some deserted  
 place

Where no foot passeth. Must I trim  
 my lamp,  
 And ever painfully toil to keep it bright,  
 When use for it is none? I must; I  
 will.  
 Though God withhold my wages, I  
 must work,  
 And watch the bringing of my work to  
 nought, —  
 Weed in the vineyard through the heat  
 o' the day,  
 And, overtasked, behold the weedy  
 place  
 Grow ranker yet in spite of me.

“Oh! yet  
 My meditated words are trodden down  
 Like a little wayside grass. Castaway  
 shells,  
 Lifted and tossed aside by a plunging  
 wave,  
 Have no more force against it than  
 have I  
 Against the sweeping, weltering wave  
 of life,  
 That, lifting and dislodging me, drives  
 on,  
 And notes not mine endeavor.”

Afterward,  
 He added more words like to these; to  
 wit,  
 That it was hard to see the world so  
 sad:  
 He would that it were happier. It was  
 hard  
 To see the blameless overborne; and  
 hard  
 To know that God, who loves the world,  
 should yet  
 Let it lie down in sorrow, when a smile  
 From Him would make it laugh and  
 sing, — a word  
 From Him transform it to a heaven.  
 He said,  
 Moreover, “When will this be done?  
 My life  
 Hath not yet reached the noon, and I  
 am tired;  
 And oh! it may be that, uncomforted  
 By foolish hope of doing good and vain  
 Conceit of being useful, I may live,  
 And it may be my duty to go on

Working for years and years, for years  
 and years.”  
 But, while the words were uttered, in  
 his heart  
 There dawned a vague alarm. He was  
 aware  
 That somewhat touched him, and he  
 lifted up  
 His face. “I am alone,” the curate  
 said, —  
 “I think I am alone. What is it,  
 then?  
 I am ashamed! My raiment is not  
 clean.  
 My lips, — I am afraid they are not  
 clean.  
 My heart is darkened and unclean.  
 Ah me,  
 To be a man, and yet to tremble so!  
 Strange, strange!”

And there was sitting at his feet —  
 He could not see it plainly — at his  
 feet  
 A very little child. And, while the  
 blood  
 Drave to his heart, he set his eye on it,  
 Gazing, and, lo! the loveliness from  
 heaven  
 Took clearer form and color. He be-  
 held  
 The strange, wise sweetness of a dim-  
 pled mouth, —  
 The deep serene of eyes at home with  
 bliss,  
 And perfect in possession. So it spoke,  
 “My master!” but he answered not a  
 word;  
 And it went on: “I had a name, a  
 name.  
 He knew my name; but here they can  
 forget.”  
 The curate answered: “Nay, I know  
 thee well.  
 I love thee. Wherefore art thou  
 come?” It said,  
 “They sent me;” and he faltered,  
 “Fold thy hand,  
 O most dear little one! for on it gleams  
 A gem that is so bright I cannot look  
 Thereon.” It said, “When I did  
 leave this world,  
 That was a tear. But that was long  
 ago;

For I have lived among the happy folk,  
You wot of, ages, ages." Then said  
he,

"Do they forget us, while beneath the  
palms  
They take their infinite leisure?" And,  
with eyes

That seemed to muse upon him, look-  
ing up

In peace the little child made answer,  
"Nay;"

And murmured, in the language that he  
loved,

"How is it that his hair is not yet  
white;

For I and all the others have been long  
Waiting for him to come."

"And was it long?"

The curate answered, pondering.

"Time being done,  
Shall life indeed expand, and give the  
sense,

In our to-come, of infinite extension?"

Then said the child, "In heaven we  
children talk

Of the great matters, and our lips are  
wise;

But here I can but talk with thee in  
words

That here I knew." And therewithal,  
arisen,

It said, "I pray you take me in your  
arms."

Then, being afraid but willing, so he  
did;

And partly drew about the radiant  
child,

For better covering its dread purity,  
The foldings of his gown. And he be-  
held

Its beauty, and the tremulous woven  
light

That hung upon its hair; withal, the  
robe,

'Whiter than fuller of this world can  
white,'

That clothed its immortality. And so  
The trembling came again, and he was

dumb,  
Repenting his uncleanness: and he  
lift

His eyes, and all the holy place was  
full

Of living things; and some were faint  
and dim,

As if they bore an intermittent life,  
Waxing and waning; and they had no  
form,

But drifted on like slowly trailed clouds,  
Or moving spots of darkness, with an  
eye

Apiece. And some, in guise of evil  
birds,

Came by in troops, and stretched their  
naked necks,

And some were men-like, but their  
heads hung down;

And he said, "O my God! let me find  
grace

Not to behold their faces, for I know  
They must be wicked and right terri-  
ble."

But while he prayed, lo! whispers; and  
there moved

Two shadows on the wall. He could  
not see

The forms of them that cast them: he  
could see

Only the shadows as of two that sat  
Upon the floor, where, clad in women's

weeds,  
They lisped together. And he shud-  
dered much:

There was a rustling near him, and he  
feared

Lest they should touch him, and he feel  
their touch.

"It is not great," quoth one, "the  
work achieved.

We do, and we delight to do, our  
best:

But that is little; for, my dear," quoth  
she,

"This tower and town have been in-  
fested long

With angels." — "Ay," the other made  
reply,

"I had a little evil one, of late,  
That I picked up as it was crawling

out  
O' the pit, and took and cherished in  
my breast.

It would divine for me, and oft would  
moan,

'Pray thee, no churches,' and it spake  
of this.

But I was harried once, — thou know'st  
 by whom, —  
 And fled in here; and, when he followed me,  
 I crouching by this pillar, he let  
 down  
 His hand, — being all too proud to send  
 his eyes  
 In its wake, — and, plucking forth my  
 tender imp,  
 Flung it behind him. It went yelping  
 forth;  
 And, as for me, I never saw it more.  
 Much is against us, — very much: the  
 times  
 Are hard." She paused: her fellow  
 took the word,  
 Plaining on such as preach and them  
 that plead.  
 "Even such as haunt the yawning  
 mouths of hell,"  
 Quoth she, "and pluck them back that  
 run thereto."  
 Then, like a sudden blow, there fell on  
 him  
 The utterance of his name. "There is  
 no soul  
 That I loathe more, and oftener curse.  
 Woe's me,  
 That cursing should be vain! Ay, he  
 will go  
 Gather the sucking children, that are  
 yet  
 Too young for us, and watch and shelter  
 them  
 Till the strong Angels — pitiless and  
 stern,  
 But to them loving ever — sweep them  
 in,  
 By armsful, to the unapproachable fold.

"We strew his path with gold: it will  
 not lie.  
 'Deal softly with him,' was the master's word.  
 We brought him all delights: his angel  
 came  
 And stood between them and his eyes.  
 They spend  
 Much pains upon him, — keep him  
 poor and low  
 And unbeloved; and thus he gives his  
 mind

To fill the fateful, the impregnable  
 Child-fold, and sow on earth the seed  
 of stars.

"Oh! hard is serving against love, —  
 the love  
 Of the Unspeakable; for if we soil  
 The souls He openeth out a washing-  
 place;  
 And if we grudge, and snatch away the  
 bread,  
 Then will He save by poverty, and  
 gain  
 By early giving up of blameless life;  
 And if we shed out gold, He even will  
 save  
 In spite of gold, — of twice-refined  
 gold."

With that the curate set his daunted  
 eyes  
 To look upon the shadows of the fiends.  
 He was made sure they could not see  
 the child  
 That nestled in his arms; he also knew  
 They were unconscious that his mortal  
 ears  
 Had new intelligence, which gave their  
 speech  
 Possible entrance through his garb of  
 clay.

He was afraid, yet awful gladness  
 reached  
 His soul: the testimony of the lost  
 Upbraided him; but while he trembled  
 yet,  
 The heavenly child had lifted up its  
 head  
 And left his arms, and on the marble  
 floor  
 Stood beckoning.

And, its touch withdrawn, the place  
 Was silent, empty; all that swarming  
 tribe  
 Of evil ones concealed behind the veil,  
 And shut into their separate world,  
 were closed  
 From his observance. He arose, and  
 paced  
 After the little child, — as half in fear  
 That it would leave him, — till they  
 reached a door;

And then said he, — but much distraught he spoke,  
 Laying his hand across the lock, —  
 "This door  
 Shuts in the stairs whereby men mount the tower.  
 Wouldst thou go up, and so withdraw to heaven?"  
 It answered, "I will mount them."  
 Then said he,  
 "And I will follow." — "So thou shalt do well,"  
 The radiant thing replied, and it went up,  
 And he, amazed, went after; for the stairs,  
 Otherwhile dark, were lightened by the rays  
 Shed out of raiment woven in high heaven,  
 And hair whereon had smiled the light of God.

With that, they, pacing on, came out at last  
 Into a dim, weird place, — a chamber formed  
 Betwixt the roofs: for you shall know that all  
 The vaulting of the nave, fretted and fine,  
 Was covered with the dust of ages, laid  
 Thick with those chips of stone which they had left  
 Who wrought it; but a high-pitched roof was reared  
 Above it, and the western gable pierced  
 With three long narrow lights. Great tie-beams loomed  
 Across, and many daws frequented there,  
 The starling and the sparrow littered it  
 With straw, and peeped from many a shady nook;  
 And there was lifting up of wings, and there  
 Was hasty exit when the curate came.  
 But sitting on a beam and moving not  
 For him, he saw two fair gray turtle-doves  
 Bowing their heads, and cooing; and the child

Put forth a hand to touch his own, but straight  
 He, startled, drew it back, because, forsooth,  
 A stirring fancy smote him, and he thought  
 That language trembled on their innocent tongues,  
 And floated forth in speech that man could hear.  
 Then said the child, "Yet touch, my master dear."  
 And he let down his hand, and touched again;  
 And so it was. "But if they had their way,"  
 One turtle cooed, "how should this world go on?"

Then he looked well upon them, as he stood  
 Upright before them. They were feathered doves,  
 And sitting close together; and their eyes  
 Were rounded with the rim that marks their kind.  
 Their tender crimson feet did pat the beam, —  
 No phantoms they; and soon the fellow-dove  
 Made answer, "Nay, they count themselves so wise,  
 There is no task they shall be set to do  
 But they will ask God why. What mean they so?"  
 The glory is not in the task, but in  
 The doing it for Him. What should he think,  
 Brother, this man that must, forsooth, be set  
 Such noble work, and suffered to behold  
 Its fruit, if he knew more of us and ours?"  
 With that the other leaned, as if attent:  
 "I am not perfect, brother, in his thought."  
 The mystic bird replied, "Brother, he saith,  
 'But it is nought: the work is over-hard.'  
 Whose fault is that? God sets not overwork.



He saith the world is sorrowful, and he  
 Is therefore sorrowful. He cannot  
 set  
 The crooked straight; — but who de-  
 mands of him,  
 O brother, that he should? What!  
 thinks he, then,  
 His work is God's advantage, and his  
 will  
 More bent to aid the world than its  
 dread Lord's.  
 Nay, yet there live amongst us legions  
 fair,  
 Millions on millions, who could do  
 right well  
 What he must fail in; and 'twas whis-  
 pered me,  
 That chiefly for himself the task is  
 given, —  
 His little daily task." With that he  
 paused.

Then said the other, preening its fair  
 wing,  
 "Men have discovered all God's is-  
 lands now,  
 And given them names; whereof they  
 are as proud,  
 And deem themselves as great, as if  
 their hands  
 Had made them. Strange is man,  
 and strange his pride.  
 Now, as for us, it matters not to learn  
 What and from whence we be: How  
 should we tell?  
 Our world is undiscovered in these  
 skies,  
 Our names not whispered. Yet, for  
 us and ours,  
 What joy it is, — permission to come  
 down,  
 Not souls, as he, to the bosom of their  
 God,  
 To guide, but to their goal the winged  
 fowls,  
 His lovely lower-fashioned lives to  
 help  
 To take their forms by legions, fly, and  
 draw  
 With us the sweet, obedient, flocking  
 things  
 That ever hear our message reverently,  
 And follow us far. How should they  
 know their way,

Forsooth, alone? Men say they fly  
 alone;  
 Yet some have set on record, and  
 averred,  
 That they, among the flocks, had duly  
 marked  
 A leader."

Then his fellow made reply:  
 "They might divine the Maker's heart.  
 Come forth,  
 Fair dove, to find the flocks, and guide  
 their wings,  
 For Him that loveth them."

With that, the child  
 Withdrew his hand, and all their  
 speech was done.  
 He moved toward them, but they  
 fluttered forth  
 And fled into the sunshine.

"I would fain,"  
 Said he, "have heard some more.  
 And wilt thou go?"  
 He added to the child, for this had  
 turned.  
 "Ay," quoth he, gently, "to the beg-  
 gar's place;  
 For I would see the beggar in the  
 porch."

So they went down together to the  
 door,  
 Which, when the curate opened, lo!  
 without  
 The beggar sat; and he saluted him:  
 "Good morrow, master." "Where-  
 fore art thou here?"  
 The curate asked: "it is not service-  
 time,  
 And none will enter now to give thee  
 alms."  
 Then said the beggar, "I have hope  
 at heart  
 That I shall go to my poor house no  
 more."  
 "Art thou so sick that thou dost think  
 to die?"  
 The curate said. With that the beggar  
 laughed,  
 And under his dim eyelids gathered  
 tears,

And he was all a-tremble with a strange  
 And moving exaltation. "Ay," quoth  
 he,  
 And set his face toward high heaven:  
 "I think  
 The blessing that I wait on must be  
 near."  
 Then said the curate, "God be good to  
 thee."  
 And, straight, the little child put forth  
 his hand,  
 And touched him. "Master, master,  
 hush!  
 You should not, master, speak so care-  
 lessly  
 In this great presence."

But the touch so wrought,  
 That, lo! the dazzled curate staggered  
 back,  
 For dread effulgence from the beggar's  
 eyes  
 Smote him, and from the crippled  
 limbs shot forth  
 Terrible lights, as pure long blades of  
 fire.  
 "Withdraw thy touch! withdraw thy  
 touch!" he cried,  
 "Or else shall I be blinded." Then  
 the child  
 Stood back from him; and he sat down  
 apart,  
 Recovering of his manhood: and he  
 heard  
 The beggar and the child discourse of  
 things  
 Dreadful for glory, till his spirits came  
 Anew; and, when the beggar looked  
 on him,  
 He said, "If I offend not, pray you tell  
 Who and what are you, — I behold  
 a face  
 Marred with old age, sickness, and  
 poverty, —  
 A cripple with a staff, who long hath  
 sat  
 Begging, and oftentimes moaning, in the  
 porch,  
 For pain and for the wind's inclemency.  
 What are you?" Then the beggar  
 made reply,  
 "I was a delegate, a living power;  
 My work was bliss, for seeds were in  
 my hand

To plant a new-made world. O happy  
 work!  
 It grew and blossomed; but my dwell-  
 ing-place  
 Was far remote from heaven. I have  
 not seen;  
 I knew no wish to enter there. But,  
 lo!  
 There went forth rumors, running out  
 like rays,  
 How some, that were of power like  
 even to mine,  
 Had made request to come and find a  
 place  
 Within its walls. And these were  
 satisfied  
 With promises, and sent to this far  
 world  
 To take the weeds of your mortality,  
 And minister, and suffer grief and pain,  
 And die like men. Then were they  
 gathered in.  
 They saw a face, and were accounted  
 kin  
 To Whom thou knowest, for He is kin  
 to men.

"Then I did wait; and oft, at work, I  
 sang,  
 'To minister! oh, joy, to minister!'  
 And, it being known, a message came  
 to me:  
 'Whether is best, thou forest-planter  
 wise,  
 To minister to others, or that they  
 Should minister to thee?' Then, on  
 my face  
 Low lying, I made answer: 'It is best,  
 Most High, to minister;' and thus  
 came back  
 The answer, — 'Choose not for thyself  
 the best:  
 Go down, and, lo! my poor shall minis-  
 ter,  
 Out of their poverty, to thee; shall  
 learn  
 Compassion by thy frailty; and shall  
 oft  
 Turn back, when speeding home from  
 work, to help  
 Thee, weak and crippled, home.' My  
 little ones,  
 Thou shalt importune for their slender  
 mite,

And pray, and move them that they  
     give it up  
 For love of Me.”

The curate answered him,  
 “Art thou content, O great one from  
     afar!

If I may ask, and not offend?” He  
     said,

“I am. Behold! I stand not all alone,  
 That I should think to do a perfect  
     work.

I may not wish to give; for I have  
     heard

’Tis best for me that I receive. For  
     me,

God is the only giver, and His gift  
 Is one.” With that, the little child  
     sighed out,

“O master! master! I am out of  
     heaven

Since noonday, and I hear them calling  
     me.

If you be ready, great one, let us go:—  
 Hark! hark! they call.”

Then did the beggar lift  
 His face to heaven, and utter forth a  
     cry

As of the pangs of death, and every  
     tree

Moved as if shaken by a sudden  
     wind.

He cried again, and there came forth a  
     hand

From some invisible form, which, being  
     laid

A little moment on the curate’s eyes,  
 It dazzled him with light that brake  
     from it,

So that he saw no more.

“What shall I do?”

The curate murmured, when he came  
     again

To himself and looked about him.  
 “This is strange!

My thoughts are all astray; and yet,  
     methinks,

A weight is taken from my heart. Lo!  
     lo!

There lieth at my feet, frail, white, and  
     dead,

The sometime beggar. He is happy  
     now.

There was a child; but he is gone, and  
     he

Is also happy. I am glad to think  
 I am not bound to make the wrong go  
     right;

But only to discover, and to do,  
 With cheerful heart, the work that God  
     appoints.”

With that, he did compose, with rever-  
     ent care,

The dead; continuing, “I will trust in  
     Him,

THAT HE CAN HOLD HIS OWN; and I  
     will take

His will, above the work He sendeth  
     me,

To be my chiefest good.”

Then went he forth,  
 “I shall die early,” thinking: “I am  
     warned,

By this fair vision, that I have not  
     long

To live.” Yet he lived on to good old  
     age;—

Ay, he lives yet, and he is working  
     still.

It may be there are many in like case:  
 They give themselves, and are in misery  
 Because the gift is small, and doth not  
     make

The world by so much better as they  
     fain

Would have it. ’Tis a fault; but, as  
     for us,

Let us not blame them. Maybe, ’tis a  
     fault

More kindly looked on by The Majesty  
 Than our best virtues are. Why, what  
     are we!

What have we given, and what have we  
     desired

To give, the world?

There must be something wrong.  
 Look to it: let us mend our ways.  
     Farewell.

## A BIRTHDAY WALK.

(WRITTEN FOR A FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY.)

—  
 "The days of our life are threescore  
 years and ten."  
 —

A BIRTHDAY:—and now a day that  
 rose  
 With much of hope, with meaning  
 rife—  
 A thoughtful day from dawn to close :  
 The middle day of human life.

In sloping fields on narrow plains,  
 The sheep were feeding on their  
 knees,  
 As we went through the winding lanes,  
 Strewed with red buds of alder-trees.

So warm the day—its influence lent  
 To flagging thought a stronger wing;  
 So utterly was winter spent,  
 So sudden was the birth of spring.

Wild crocus flowers in copse and  
 hedge—  
 In sunlight, clustering thick below,  
 Sighed for the firwood's shaded ledge,  
 Where sparkled yet a line of snow.

And crowded snowdrops faintly hung  
 Their fair heads lower for the heat,  
 While in still air all branches flung  
 Their shadowy doubles at our feet.

And through the hedge the sunbeams  
 crept,  
 Dropped through the maple and the  
 birch;  
 And lost in airy distance slept  
 On the broad tower of Tamworth  
 Church.

Then, lingering on the downward way,  
 A little space we resting stood,  
 To watch the golden haze that lay  
 Adown that river by the wood.

A distance vague, the bloom of sleep  
 The constant sun had lent the scene,  
 A veiling charm on dingles deep  
 Lay soft those pastoral hills between.

There are some days that die not out,  
 Nor alter by reflection's power,  
 Whose converse calm, whose words  
 devout,  
 For ever rest, the spirit's dower.

And they are days when drops a veil—  
 A mist upon the distance past;  
 And while we say to peace—"All  
 hail!"  
 We hope that always it shall last.

Times when the troubles of the heart  
 Are hushed—as winds were hushed  
 that day—  
 And budding hopes begin to start,  
 Like those green hedgerows on our  
 way:

When all within and all around,  
 Like hues on that sweet landscape  
 blend,  
 And Nature's hand has made to sound  
 The heartstrings that her touch at-  
 tend:

When there are rays within, like those  
 That streamed through maple and  
 through birch,  
 And rested in such calm repose  
 On the broad tower of Tamworth  
 Church.

## NOT IN VAIN I WAITED.

SHE was but a child, a child,  
 And I a man grown;  
 Sweet she was, and fresh, and wild,  
 And, I thought, my own.  
 What could I do? The long grass  
 groweth,  
 The long wave floweth with a mur-  
 mur on:  
 The why and the wherefore of it all  
 who knoweth?  
 Ere I thought to lose her she was  
 grown—and gone.

This day or that day in warm spring  
weather,  
The lamb that was tame will yearn to  
break its tether.  
"But if the world wound thee," I said,  
"come back to me,  
Down in the dell wishing — wishing,  
wishing for thee."

The dews hang on the white may,  
Like a ghost it stands,  
All in the dusk before day  
That folds the dim lands:  
Dark fell the skies when once belated,  
Sad, and sorrow-fated, I missed the  
sun;  
But wake, heart, and sing, for not in  
vain I waited.  
O clear, O solemn dawning, lo, the  
maid is won!  
Sweet dews, dry early on the grass and  
clover,  
Lest the bride wet her feet while she  
walks over;  
Shine to-day, sunbeams, and make all  
fair to see:  
Down the dell she's coming — coming,  
coming with me.

### A GLEANING SONG.

"WHITHER away, thou little careless  
rover?  
(Kind Roger's true)  
Whither away, across yon bents and  
clover,  
Wet, wet with dew?"  
"Roger here, Roger there —  
Roger — O, he sighed,  
Yet let me glean among the wheat,  
Nor sit kind Roger's bride."  
"What wilt thou do when all the  
gleaning's ended,  
What wilt thou do?  
The cold will come, and fog and frost-  
work blended  
(Kind Roger's true)."  
"Sleet and rain, cloud and storm,  
When they cease to frown  
I'll bind me primrose bunches sweet,  
And cry them up the town."

"What if at last thy careless heart  
awaking  
This day thou rue?"  
"I'll cry my flowers, and think for all  
its breaking,  
Kind Roger's true;  
Roger here, Roger there,  
O, my true love sighed,  
Sigh once, once more, I'll stay my  
feet  
And rest kind Roger's bride."

### WITH A DIAMOND.

WHILE Time a grim old lion gnawing  
lay,  
And mumbled with his teeth yon  
regal tomb,  
Like some immortal tear undimmed  
for aye,  
This gem was dropped among the  
dust of doom.

Dropped, haply, by a sad, forgotten  
queen,  
A tear to outlast name, and fame,  
and tongue:  
Her other tears, and ours, all tears  
terrene,  
For great new griefs to be hereafter  
sung.

Take it, — a goddess might have wept  
such tears,  
Or Dame Electra changed into a  
star,  
That waxed so dim because her chil-  
dren's years  
In leaguered Troy were bitter through  
long war.

Not till the end to end to grow dull or  
waste, —  
Ah, what a little while the light we  
share!  
Hand after hand shall yet with this be  
graced,  
Signing the Will that leaves it to an  
heir.

## FANCY.

O FANCY, if thou flyest, come back anon,  
 Thy fluttering wings are soft as love's first word,  
 And fragrant as the feathers of that bird,  
 Which feeds upon the budded cinnamon  
 I ask thee not to work, or sigh — play on,  
 From nought that was not, was, or is, deterred;  
 The flax that Old Fate spun thy flights have stirred,  
 And waved memorial grass of Marathon.  
 Play, but be gentle, not as on that day  
 I saw thee running down the rims of doom  
 With stars thou hadst been stealing — while they lay  
 Smothered in light and blue — clasped to thy breast;  
 Bring rather to me in the firelit room  
 A netted halcyon bird to sing of rest.

## COMPENSATION.

ONE launched a ship, but she was wrecked at sea;  
 He built a bridge, but floods have borne it down;  
 He meant much good, none came: strange destiny,  
 His corn lies sunk, his bridge bears none to town,  
 Yet good he had not meant became his crown;  
 For once at work, when even as nature free,  
 From thought of good he was, or of renown,  
 God took the work for good and let good be.  
 So wakened with a trembling after sleep,  
 Dread Mona Roa yields her fateful store;  
 All gleaming hot the scarlet rivers creep,

And fanned of great-leaved palms slip to the shore,  
 Then stolen to unplumbed wastes of that far deep,  
 Lay the foundations for one island more.

## LOOKING DOWN.

MOUNTAINS of sorrow, I have heard your moans,  
 And the moving of your pines; but we sit high  
 On your green shoulders, nearer stoops the sky,  
 And pure airs visit us from all the zones.  
 Sweet world beneath, too happy far to sigh,  
 Dost thou look thus beheld from heavenly thrones?  
 No; not for all the love that counts thy stones,  
 While sleepy with great light the valleys lie.  
 Strange, rapturous peace! its sunshine doth enfold  
 My heart; I have escaped to the days divine,  
 It seemeth as bygone ages back had rolled,  
 And all the eldest past was now, was mine;  
 Nay, even as if Melchizedec of old  
 Might here come forth to us with bread and wine.

## MARRIED LOVERS.

COME away, the clouds are high,  
 Put the flashing needles by.  
 Many days are not to spare,  
 Or to waste, my fairest fair!  
 All is ready. Come to-day,  
 For the nightingale her lay,  
 When she findeth that the whole  
 Of her love, and all her soul,  
 Cannot forth of her sweet throat,  
 Sobs the while she draws her breath,  
 And the bravery of her note  
 In a few days altereth.

Come, ere she despond, and see  
 In a silent ecstasy  
 Chestnuts heave for hours and hours  
 All the glory of their flowers  
 To the melting blue above,  
 That broods over them like love.  
 Leave the garden walls, where blow  
 Apple-blossoms pink, and low  
 Ordered beds of tulips fine.  
 Seek the blossoms made divine  
 With a scent that is their soul.  
 These are soulless. Bring the white  
 Of thy gown to bathe in light  
 Walls for narrow hearts. The whole  
 Earth is found, and air and sea,  
 Not too wide for thee and me.

Not too wide, and yet thy face  
 Gives the meaning of all space,  
 And thine eyes, with starbeams fraught,  
 Hold the measure of all thought;  
 For of them my soul besought,  
 And was shown a glimpse of thine —  
 A veiled vestal, with divine  
 Solace, in sweet love's despair,  
 For that life is brief as fair.  
 Who hath most, he yearneth most,  
 Sure, as seldom heretofore,  
 Somewhere of the gracious more.  
 Deepest joy the least shall boast,  
 Asking with new-opened eyes  
 The remainder; that which lies  
 O, so fair! but not all conned —  
 O, so near! and yet beyond.

Come, and in the woodland sit,  
 Seem a wanted part of it.  
 Then, when moves the delicate air,  
 And the glories of thy hair  
 Little flickering sun-rays strike,  
 Let me see what thou art like;  
 For great love enthralles me so,  
 That, in sooth, I scarcely know.  
 Show me, in a house all green,  
 Save for long gold wedges' sheen,  
 Where the flies, white sparks of fire,  
 Dart and hover and aspire,  
 And the leaves, air-stirred on high,  
 Feel such joy they needs must sigh,  
 And the untracked grass makes sweet  
 All fair flowers to touch thy feet,  
 And the bees about them hum.  
 All the world is waiting. Come!

## A WINTER SONG.

CAME the dread Archer up yonder  
 lawn —

Night is the time for the old to die —  
 But woe for an arrow that smote the  
 fawn,

When the hind that was sick un-  
 scathed went by.

Father lay moaning, "Her fault was  
 sore

(Night is the time when the old  
 must die),

Yet, ah to bless her, my child, once  
 more,

For heart is failing: the end is  
 nigh."

"Daughter, my daughter, my girl," I  
 cried

(Night is the time for the old to die),  
 "Woe for the wish if till morn ye  
 bide" —

Dark was the welkin and wild the  
 sky.

Heavily plunged from the roof the  
 snow —

(Night is the time when the old will  
 die),

She answered, "My mother, 'tis well,  
 I go."

Sparkled the north star, the wrack  
 flew high.

First at his head, and last at his feet  
 (Night is the time when the old  
 should die),

Kneeling I watched till his soul did  
 fleet,

None else that loved him, none else  
 were nigh.

I wept in the night as the desolate  
 weep

(Night is the time for the old to die),  
 Cometh my daughter? the drifts are  
 deep,

Across the cold hollows how white  
 they lie.

I sought her afar through the spectral  
trees  
(Night is the time when the old must  
die),  
The fells were all muffled, the floods  
did freeze,  
And a wrathful moon hung red in  
the sky.

By night I found her where pent  
waves steal  
(Night is the time when the old should  
die),  
But she lay stiff by the locked mill-  
wheel,  
And the old stars lived in their homes  
on high.



### BINDING SHEAVES.

HARK! a lover binding sheaves  
To his maiden sings,  
Flutter, flutter go the leaves,  
Larks drop their wings.  
Little brooks for all their mirth  
Are not blythe as he.  
"Give me what the love is worth  
That I give thee.

"Speech that cannot be forborne  
Tells the story through:  
I sowed my love in with the corn,  
And they both grew.  
Count the world full wide of girth,  
And hived honey sweet,  
But count the love of more worth  
Laid at thy feet.

"Money's worth is house and land,  
Velvet coat and vest.  
Work's worth is bread in hand,  
Ay, and sweet rest.  
Wilt thou learn what love is worth?  
Ah! she sits above,  
Sighing, 'Weigh me not with earth,  
Love's worth is love.'"

### WORK.

LIKE coral insects multitudinous  
The minutes are whereof our life is  
made.  
They build it up as in the deep's blue  
shade  
It grows, it comes to light, and then,  
and thus  
For both there is an end. The popu-  
lous  
Sea-blossoms close, our minutes that  
have paid  
Life's debt of work are spent; the  
work is laid  
Before our feet that shall come after us.  
We may not stay to watch if it will  
speed,  
The bard if on some luter's string his  
song  
Live sweetly yet; the hero if his star  
Doth shine. Work is its own best  
earthly need,  
Else have we none more than the  
sea-born throng  
Who wrought those marvellous isles  
that bloom afar.



### WISHING.

WHEN I reflect how little I have done,  
And add to that how little I have  
seen,  
Then furthermore how little I have won  
Of joy, or good, how little known, or  
been:  
I long for other life more full, more  
keen,  
And yearn to change with such as well  
have run —  
Yet reason mocks me — nay, the soul,  
I ween,  
Granted her choice would dare to  
change with none;  
No, — not to feel, as Blondel when his  
lay  
Pierced the strong tower, and Rich-  
ard answered it —  
No, not to do, as Eustace on the day  
He left fair Calais to her weeping  
fit —



No, not to be, — Columbus, waked from sleep  
When his new world rose from the charmed deep.

—◆—  
TO —.

STRANGE was the doom of Heracles,  
whose shade  
Had dwelling in dim Hades the un-  
blest,  
While yet his form and presence sat a  
guest  
With the old immortals when the feast  
was made.  
Thine like, thus differs; form and pres-  
ence laid  
In this dim chamber of enforced  
rest,  
It is the unseen "shade" which,  
risen, hath pressed  
Above all heights where feet Olympian  
strayed.  
My soul admires to hear thee speak;  
thy thought  
Falls from a high place like an Au-  
gust star,  
Or some great eagle from his air-hung  
rings —  
When swooping past a snow-cold  
mountain scar —  
Down the steep slope of a long sunbeam  
brought,  
He stirs the wheat with the steerage  
of his wings.

—◆—  
ON THE BORDERS OF CAN-  
NOCK CHASE.

A COTTAGER leaned whispering by her  
hives,  
Telling the bees some news, as they  
lit down,  
And entered one by one their waxen  
town.  
Larks passioning hung o'er their brood-  
ing wives,  
And all the sunny hills where heather  
thrives

Lay satisfied with peace. A stately  
crown  
Of trees enringed the upper headland  
brown,  
And reedy pools, wherein the moor-hen  
dives,  
Glittered and gleamed.

A resting-place for light,  
They that were bred here love it; but  
they say,  
"We shall not have it long; in three  
years' time  
A hundred pits will cast out fires by  
night,  
Down yon still glen their smoke shall  
trail its way,  
And the white ash lie thick in lieu of  
rime."

—◆—  
THE MARINER'S CAVE.

ONCE on a time there walked a mariner,  
That had been shipwrecked, on a  
lonely shore,  
And the green water made a restless  
stir,  
And a great flock of mews sped on  
before.  
He had nor food nor shelter, for the  
tide  
Rose on the one, and cliffs on the other  
side.

Brown cliffs they were; they seemed to  
pierce the sky,  
That was an awful deep of empty  
blue,  
Save that the wind was in it, and on  
high  
A wavering skein of wild-fowl tracked  
it through.  
He marked them not, but went with  
movement slow,  
Because his thoughts were sad, his  
courage low.

His heart was numb, he neither wept  
nor sighed,  
But wearifully lingered by the wave;

Until at length it chanced that he  
espied,

Far up, an opening in the cliff, a  
cave,  
A shelter where to sleep in his distress,  
And lose his sorrow in forgetfulness.

With that he clambered up the rugged  
face

Of that steep cliff that all in shadow  
lay,

And, lo, there was a dry and homelike  
place,

Comforting refuge for the castaway ;  
And he laid down his weary, weary  
head,

And took his fill of sleep till dawn waxed  
red.

When he awoke, warm stirring from  
the south

Of delicate summer air did sough and  
flow ;

He rose, and, wending to the cavern's  
mouth,

He cast his eyes a little way below,  
Where on the narrow ledges, sharp and  
rude,

Preening their wings, the blue rock-  
pigeons cooed.

Then he looked lower and saw the  
lavender

And sea-thrift blooming in long crev-  
ices,

And the brown wallflower — April's  
messenger,

The wallflower marshalled in her  
companies.

Then lower yet he looked adown the  
steep,

And sheer beneath him lapped the  
lovely deep.

The laughing deep ; — and it was paci-  
fied

As if it had not raged that other day.  
And it went murmuring in the morn-  
ingtide

Innumerable flatteries on its way,  
Kissing the cliffs and whispering at  
their feet

With exquisite advancement, and re-  
treat.

This when the mariner beheld he  
sighed,

And thought on his companions lying  
low.

But while he gazed with eyes unsat-  
isfied

On the fair reaches of their over-  
throw,

Thinking it strange he only lived of all,  
But not returning thanks, he heard a  
call !

A soft sweet call, a voice of tender ruth,  
He thought it came from out the cave.

And, lo,  
It whispered, " Man, look up ! " But  
he, forsooth,

Answered, " I cannot, for the long  
waves flow

Across my gallant ship where sunk she  
lies

With all my riches and my merchan-  
dise.

" Moreover, I am heavy for the fate  
Of these my mariners drowned in the  
deep ;

I must lament me for their sad estate  
Now they are gathered in their last  
long sleep.

O ! the un pitying heavens upon me  
frown,

Then how should I look up ? — I must  
look down."

And he stood yet watching the fair  
green sea

Till hunger reached him ; then he  
made a fire,

A driftwood fire, and wandered list-  
lessly

And gathered many eggs at his de-  
sire,

And dressed them for his meal, and  
then he lay

And slept, and woke upon the second  
day.

When as he said, " the cave shall be  
my home ;

None will molest me, for the brown  
cliffs rise

Like castles of defence behind, — the  
foam

Of the remorseless sea beneath me  
lies ;

'Tis easy from the cliff my food to  
win, —

The nations of the rock-dove breed  
therein.

"For fuel, at the ebb yon fair expanse  
Is strewn with driftwood by the  
breaking wave,

And in the sea is fish for sustenance.  
I will build up the entrance of the  
cave,

And leave therein a window and a door,  
And here will dwell and leave it never-  
more."

Then even so he did ; and when his  
task,

Many long days being over, was com-  
plete ;

When he had eaten, as he sat to bask  
In the red firelight glowing at his feet,  
He was right glad of shelter, and he  
said,

"Now for my comrades am I com-  
forted."

Then did the voice awake and speak  
again ;

It murmured, "Man, look up!"  
But he replied,

"I cannot. O, mine eyes, mine eyes  
are faint

Down on the red wood-ashes to  
abide

Because they warm me." Then the  
voice was still,

And left the lonely mariner to his will.

And soon it came to pass that he got  
gain.

He had great flocks of pigeons which  
he fed,

And drew great store of fish from out  
the main,

And down from eiderducks ; and  
then he said,

"It is not good that I should lead my  
life

In silence, I will take to me a wife."

He took a wife, and brought her home  
to him ;

And he was good to her and cherished  
her

So that she loved him ; then when  
light waxed dim

Gloom came no more ; and she  
would minister

To all his wants ; while he, being well  
content,

Counted her company right excellent.

But once as on the lintel of the door  
She leaned to watch him while he  
put to sea,

This happy wife, down-gazing at the  
shore,

Said sweetly, "It is better now with  
me

Than it was lately when I used to spin  
In my old father's house beside the  
lin."

And then the soft voice of the cave  
awoke —

The soft voice which had haunted it  
erewhile —

And gently to the wife it also spoke,  
"Woman, look up!" But she,

With tender guile

Gave it denial, answering, "Nay, not  
so,

For all that I should look on lieth be-  
low.

"The great sky overhead is not so  
good

For my two eyes as yonder stainless  
sea,

The source and yielder of our liveli-  
hood,

Where rocks his little boat that  
loveth me."

This when the wife had said she moved  
away,

And looked no higher than the wave  
all day.

Now when the year ran out a child she  
bore,

And there was such rejoicing in the  
cave

As surely never had there been before

Since God first made it. Then full,  
sweet, and grave,  
The voice, "God's utmost blessing  
brims thy cup,  
O, father of this child, look up, look  
up!"

"Speak to my wife," the mariner re-  
plied.

"I have much work — right welcome  
work 'tis true —  
Another mouth to feed." And then it  
sighed,

"Woman, look up!" She said,  
"Make no ado,  
For I must needs look down, on any-  
wise,  
My heaven is in the blue of these dear  
eyes."

The seasons of the year did swiftly  
whirl,

They measured time by one small  
life alone;  
On such a day the pretty pushing  
pearl

That mouth they loved to kiss had  
sweetly shown,  
That smiling mouth, and it had made  
essay  
To give them names on such another  
day.

And afterward his infant history,  
Whether he played with baubles on  
the floor,

Or crept to pat the rock-doves pecking  
nigh,

And feeding on the threshold of the  
door,

They loved to mark, and all his mar-  
vellings dim,

The mysteries that beguiled and baffled  
him.

He was so sweet, that oft his mother  
said,

"O, child, how was it that I dwelt  
content

Before thou camest? Blessings on thy  
head,

Thy pretty talk it is so innocent,

That oft for all my joy, though it be  
deep,  
When thou art prattling, I am like to  
weep."

Summer and winter spent themselves  
again,

The rock-doves in their season bred,  
the cliff

Grew sweet, for every cleft would enter-  
tain

Its tuft of blossom, and the mariner's  
skiff,

Early and late, would linger in the  
bay,

Because the sea was calm and winds  
away.

The little child about that rocky  
height,

Led by her loving hand who gave  
him birth,

Might wander in the clear unclouded  
light,

And takes his pastime in the beau-  
teous earth;

Smell the fair flowers in stony cradles  
swung,

And see God's happy creatures feed  
their young.

And once it came to pass, at eventide,  
His mother set him in the cavern  
door,

And filled his lap with grain, and stood  
aside

To watch the circling rock-doves  
soar, and soar,

Then dip, alight, and run in circling  
bands,

To take the barley from his open hands.

And even while she stood and gazed at  
him,

And his grave father's eyes upon  
him dwelt,

They heard the tender voice, and it  
was dim,

And seemed full softly in the air to  
melt;

"Father," it murmured, "Mother,"  
dying away,

"Look up, while yet the hours are  
called to-day."

"I will," the father answered, "but not now ;"

The mother said, "Sweet voice, O speak to me  
At a convenient season." And the brow

Of the cliff began to quake right fearfully,  
There was a rending crash, and there did leap  
A riven rock and plunge into the deep.

They said, "A storm is coming ;" but they slept

That night in peace, and thought the storm had passed,

For there was not a cloud to intercept  
The sacred moonlight on the cradle cast ;

And to his rocking boat at dawn of day,  
With joy of heart the mariner took his way.

But when he mounted up the path at night,  
Foreboding not of trouble or mischance,

His wife came out into the fading light,  
And met him with a serious countenance ;

And she broke out in tears and sobbings thick,  
"The child is sick, my little child is sick."

They knelt beside him in the sultry dark,

And when the moon looked in his face was pale,

And when the red sun, like a burning barque,

Rose in a fog at sea, his tender wail  
Sank deep into their hearts, and piteously

They fell to chiding of their destiny.

The doves unheeded cooed that live-long day,

Their pretty playmate cared for them no more ;

The sea-thrift nodded, wet with glistening spray,

None gathered it ; the long wave washed the shore ;  
He did not know, nor lift his eyes to trace,  
The new fallen shadow in his dwelling-place.

The sultry sun beat on the cliffs all day,  
And hot calm airs slept on the polished sea,

The mournful mother wore her time away,

Bemoaning of her helpless misery,  
Pleading and plaining, till the day was done,

"O look on me, my love, my little one.

"What aileth thee, that thou dost lie and moan ?

Ah, would that I might bear it in thy stead."

The father made not his forebodings known,

But gazed, and in his secret soul he said,

"I may have sinned, on sin waits punishment,

But as for him, sweet blameless innocent,

"What has he done that he is stricken down ?

O it is hard to see him sink and fade,

When I, that counted him my dear life's crown,

So willingly have worked while he has played ;

That he might sleep, have risen, come storm, come heat,

And thankfully would fast that he might eat."

My God, how short our happy days appear !

How long the sorrowful ! They thought it long,

The sultry morn that brought such evil cheer,

And sat, and wished, and sighed for evensong ;

It came, and cooling wafts about him  
 stirred,  
 Yet when they spoke he answered not  
 a word.

"Take heart," they cried, but their sad  
 hearts sank low

When he would moan and turn his  
 restless head,  
 And wearily the lagging morns would  
 go,

And nights, while they sat watching  
 by his bed,  
 Until a storm came up with wind and  
 rain,  
 And lightning ran along the troubled  
 main.

Over their heads the mighty thunders  
 brake,

Leaping and tumbling down from  
 rock to rock,

Then burst anew and made the cliffs to  
 quake

As they were living things and felt  
 the shock ;

The waiting sea to sob as if in pain,  
 And all the midnight vault to ring  
 again.

A lamp was burning in the mariner's  
 cave,

But the blue lightning flashes made  
 it dim ;

And when the mother heard those  
 thunders rave,

She took her little child to cherish  
 him ;

She took him in her arms, and on her  
 breast

Full wearily she courted him to rest,

And soothed him long until the storm  
 was spent,

And the last thunder peal had died  
 away,

And stars were out in all the firmament.  
 Then did he cease to moan, and slum-  
 bering lay,

While in the welcome silence, pure and  
 deep,

The care-worn parents sweetly fell  
 asleep.

And in a dream, enwrought with fan-  
 cies thick,

The mother thought she heard the  
 rock-doves coo

(She had forgotten that her child was  
 sick),

And she went forth their morning  
 meal to strew ;

Then over all the cliff with earnest  
 care

She sought her child, and lo, he was  
 not there !

But she was not afraid, though long she  
 sought

And climbed the cliff, and set her feet  
 in grass,

Then reached a river, broad and full,  
 she thought,

And at its brink he sat. Alas ! alas !  
 For one stood near him, fair and unde-  
 filed,

An innocent, a marvellous man-child.

In garments white as wool, and O, most  
 fair,

A rainbow covered him with mystic  
 light ;

Upon the warmed grass his feet were  
 bare,

And as he breathed, the rainbow in  
 her sight

In passions of clear crimson trembling  
 lay,

With gold and violet mist made fair the  
 day.

Her little life ! she thought, his little  
 hands

Were full of flowers that he did play  
 withal ;

But when he saw the boy o' the golden  
 lands,

And looked him in the face, he let  
 them fall,

Held through a rapturous pause in  
 wistful wise

To the sweet strangeness of those keen  
 child-eyes.

" Ah, dear and awful God, who chasten-  
 est me,

How shall my soul to this be recon-  
 ciled.

It is the Saviour of the world," quoth she,  
 "And to my child He cometh as a child."  
 Then on her knees she fell by that vast stream —  
 Oh, it was sorrowful, this woman's dream!

For lo, that Elder Child drew nearer now,  
 Fair as the light, and purer than the sun.  
 The calms of heaven were brooding on his brow,  
 And in his arms He took her little one,  
 Her child, that knew her, but with sweet demur  
 Drew back, nor held his hands to come to her.

With that in mother misery sore she wept —  
 "O Lamb of God, I love my child SO MUCH!  
 He stole away to Thee while we two slept,  
 But give him back, for Thou hast many such;  
 And as for me I have but one. O deign,  
 Dear Pity of God, to give him me again."

His feet were on the river. Oh, his feet  
 Had touched the river now, and it was great;  
 And yet He hearkened when she did entreat,  
 And turned in quietness as He would wait —  
 Wait till she looked upon Him, and behold,  
 There lay a long way off a city of gold.

Like to a jasper and a sardine stone,  
 Whelmed in the rainbow stood that fair man-child,  
 Mighty and innocent, that held her own,

And as might be his manner at home he smiled,  
 Then while she looked and looked, the vision brake,  
 And all amazed she started up awake.

And lo, her little child was gone indeed!  
 The sleep that knows no waking he had slept,  
 Folded to heaven's own heart; in rainbow brede  
 Clothed and made glad, while they two mourned and wept,  
 But in the drinking of their bitter cup  
 The sweet voice spoke once more, and sighed, "Look up!"

They heard, and straightway answered,  
 "Even so:  
 For what abides that we should look on here?  
 The heavens are better than this earth below,  
 They are of more account and far more dear.  
 We will look up, for all most sweet and fair,  
 Most pure, most excellent, is garnered there."

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### A REVERIE.

WHEN I do sit apart  
 And commune with my heart,  
 She brings me forth the treasures once my own;  
 Shows me a happy place  
 Where leaf-buds swelled apace,  
 And wasting rims of snow in sunlight shone.

Rock, in a mossy glade,  
 The larch-trees lend thee shade,  
 That just begin to feather with their leaves;  
 From out thy crevice deep  
 White tufts of snowdrops peep,  
 And melted rime drips softly from thine eaves.

Ah, rock, I know, I know  
That yet thy snowdrops grow,  
And yet doth sunshine fleck them  
through the tree,  
Whose sheltering branches hide  
The cottage at its side,  
That nevermore will shade or shelter  
me.

I know the stockdoves' note  
Athwart the glen doth float:  
With sweet foreknowledge of her twins  
oppressed,  
And longings onward sent,  
She broods before the event,  
While leisurely she mends her shallow  
nest.

Once to that cottage door,  
In happy days of yore,  
My little love made footprints in the  
snow.  
She was so glad of spring,  
She helped the birds to sing,  
I know she dwells there yet — the rest  
I do not know.

They sang, and would not stop,  
While drop, and drop, and drop,  
I heard the melted rime in sunshine  
fall;  
And narrow wandering rills,  
Where leaned the daffodils,  
Murmured and murmured on, and that  
was all.

I think, but cannot tell,  
I think she loved me well,  
And some dear fancy with my future  
twined.  
But I shall never know,  
Hope faints, and lets it go,  
That passionate want forbid to speak  
its mind.

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#### DEFTON WOOD.

I HELD my way through Defton Wood,  
And on to Wandor Hall;  
The dancing leaf let down the light,  
In hovering spots to fall.

"O young, young leaves, you match  
me well,"  
My heart was merry, and sung —  
"Now wish me joy of my sweet youth;  
My love — she, too, is young!"

O so many, many, many  
Little homes above my head!  
O so many, many, many  
Dancing blossoms round me  
spread!  
O so many, many, many  
Maidens sighing yet for none!  
Speed, ye wooers, speed with  
any —  
Speed with all but one."

I took my leave of Wandor Hall,  
And trod the woodland ways.  
"What shall I do so long to bear  
The burden of my days?"  
I sighed my heart into the boughs  
Whereby the culvers cooed;  
For only I between them went  
Unwooing and unwooed.

"O so many, many, many  
Lilies bending stately heads!  
O so many, many, many  
Strawberries ripened on their  
beds!  
O so many, many, many  
Maidens, and yet my heart undone!  
What to me are all, are any —  
I have lost my — one."

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#### THE SNOWDROP MONUMENT,

(In Lichfield Cathedral).

MARVELS of sleep, grown cold!  
Who hath not longed to fold  
With pitying ruth, forgetful of their  
bliss,  
Those cherub forms that lie,  
With none to watch them nigh,  
Or touch the silent lips with one warm  
human kiss?



What! they are left alone  
 All night with graven stone,  
 Pillars and arches that above them  
 meet;  
 While through those windows  
 high  
 The journeying stars can spy,  
 And dim blue moonbeams drop on  
 their uncovered feet?

O cold! yet look again,  
 There is a wandering vein  
 Traced in the hand where those white  
 snowdrops lie.  
 Let her rapt dreamy smile  
 The wondering heart beguile,  
 That almost thinks to hear a calm con-  
 tented sigh.

What silence dwells between  
 Those severed lips serene!  
 The rapture of sweet waiting breathes  
 and grows.  
 What trance-like peace is shed  
 On her reclining head,  
 And e'en on listless feet what languor  
 of repose!

Angels of joy and love  
 Lean softly from above  
 And whisper to her sweet and marvel-  
 lous things;  
 Tell of the golden gate  
 That opened wide doth wait,  
 And shadow her dim sleep with their  
 celestial wings.

Hearing of that blest shore  
 She thinks on earth no more,  
 Contented to forego this wintry land.  
 She has nor thought nor care  
 But to rest calmly there,  
 And hold the snowdrops pale that  
 blossom in her hand.

But on the other face  
 Broodeth a mournful grace,  
 This had foreboding thoughts beyond  
 her years,  
 While sinking thus to sleep  
 She saw her mother weep,  
 And could not lift her hand to dry  
 those heart-sick tears.

Could not — but failing lay,  
 Sighed her young life away,  
 And let her arm drop down in listless  
 rest,  
 Too weary on that bed  
 To turn her dying head,  
 Or fold the little sister nearer to her  
 breast.

Yet this is faintly told  
 On features fair and cold,  
 A look of calm surprise, of meek re-  
 gret,  
 As if with life oppressed  
 She turned her to her rest,  
 But felt her mother's love and looked  
 not to forget.

How wistfully they close,  
 Sweet eyes, to their repose!  
 How quietly declines the placid brow!  
 The young lips seem to say,  
 "I have wept much to-day,  
 And felt some bitter pains, but they  
 are over now."

Sleep! there are left below  
 Many who pine to go,  
 Many who lay it to their chastened  
 souls,  
 That gloomy days draw nigh,  
 And they are blest who die,  
 For this green world grows worse the  
 longer that she rolls.

And as for me I know  
 A little of her woe,  
 Her yearning want doth in my soul  
 abide,  
 And sighs of them that weep,  
 "O put us soon to sleep,  
 For when we wake — with Thee — we  
 shall be satisfied."



## AN ANCIENT CHESS KING.

HAPLY some Rajah first in the ages  
 gone  
 Amid his languid ladies fingered thee,  
 While a black nightingale, sun-swart  
 as he,

Sang his one wife, love's passionate  
 oraison ;  
 Haply thou may'st have pleased Old  
 Prester John  
 Among his pastures, when full roy-  
 ally  
 He sat in tent, grave shepherds at  
 his knee,  
 While lamps of balsam winked and  
 glimmered on.  
 What doest thou here? Thy masters  
 are all dead ;  
 My heart is full of ruth and yearning  
 pain  
 At sight of thee ; O king that hast a  
 crown  
 Outlasting theirs, and tell'st of great-  
 ness fled  
 Through cloud-hung nights of una-  
 bated rain  
 And murmurs of the dark majestic  
 town.



### COMFORT IN THE NIGHT.

SHE thought by heaven's high wall that  
 she did stray  
 Till she beheld the everlasting gate :  
 And she climbed up to it to long,  
 and wait,  
 Feel with her hands (for it was night),  
 and lay  
 Her lips to it with kisses ; thus to  
 pray  
 That it might open to her desolate.  
 And lo ! it trembled, lo ! her passion-  
 ate  
 Crying prevailed. A little, little way  
 It opened : there fell out a thread of  
 light,  
 And she saw wingèd wonders move  
 within ;  
 Also she heard sweet talking as they  
 meant  
 To comfort her. They said, "Who  
 comes to-night  
 Shall one day certainly an entrance  
 win ;"  
 Then the gate closed and she awoke  
 content.

### THOUGH ALL GREAT DEEDS.

THOUGH all great deeds were proved  
 but fables fine,  
 Though earth's old story could be  
 told anew,  
 Though the sweet fashions loved of  
 them that sue  
 Were empty as the ruined Delphian  
 shrine —  
 Though God did never man, in words  
 benign,  
 With sense of His great Fatherhood  
 endue, —  
 Though life immortal were a dream  
 untrue,  
 And He that promised it were not di-  
 vine —  
 Though soul, though spirit were not,  
 and all hope  
 Reaching beyond the bourn, melted  
 away ;  
 Though virtue had no goal and good no  
 scope,  
 But both were doomed to end with  
 this our clay —  
 Though all these were not, — to the un-  
 graced heir  
 Would this remain, — to live, as though  
 they were.



### THE LONG WHITE SEAM.

As I came round the harbor buoy,  
 The lights began to gleam,  
 No wave the land-locked water stirred,  
 The crags were white as cream ;  
 And I marked my love by candle-light  
 Sewing her long white seam.  
 It's aye sewing ashore, my dear,  
 Watch and steer at sea,  
 It's reef and furl, and haul the  
 line,  
 Set sail and think of thee.

I climbed to reach her cottage door ;  
 O sweetly my love sings !  
 Like a shaft of light her voice breaks  
 forth,  
 My soul to meet it springs

As the shining water leaped of old,  
 When stirred by angel wings.  
 Aye longing to list anew,  
 Awake and in my dream,  
 But never a song she sang like this,  
 Sewing her long white seam.

Fair fall the lights, the harbor lights,  
 That brought me in to thee,  
 And peace drop down on that low roof  
 For the sight that I did see,  
 And the voice, my dear, that rang so  
 clear  
 All for the love of me.  
 For O, for O, with brows bent low  
 By the candle's flickering gleam,  
 Her wedding gown it was she  
 wrought,  
 Sewing the long white seam.



## AN OLD WIFE'S SONG.

AND what will ye hear, my daughters  
 dear? —

Oh, what will ye hear this night?  
 Shall I sing you a song of the yuletide  
 cheer,  
 Or of lovers and ladies bright?

"Thou shalt sing," they say (for we  
 dwell far away  
 From the land where fain would we be),  
 "Thou shalt sing us again some old-  
 world strain  
 That is sung in our own countrie.

"Thou shalt mind us so of the times  
 long ago,  
 When we walked on the upland lea,  
 While the old harbor light waxed faint  
 in the white,  
 Long rays shooting out from the sea ;

"While lambs were yet asleep, and the  
 dew lay deep  
 On the grass, and their fleeces clean  
 and fair.  
 Never grass was seen so thick nor so  
 green  
 As the grass that grew up there!

"In the town was no smoke, for none  
 there awoke —  
 At our feet it lay still as still could  
 be ;

And we saw far below the long river  
 flow,  
 And the schooners a-warping out to  
 sea.

"Sing us now a strain shall make us  
 feel again  
 As we felt in that sacred peace of  
 morn,  
 When we had the first view of the wet  
 sparkling dew,  
 In the shyness of a day just born."

So I sang an old song — it was plain  
 and not long —  
 I had sung it very oft when they  
 were small ;  
 And long ere it was done they wept  
 every one :  
 Yet this was all the song — this was  
 all : —

The snow lies white, and the moon  
 gives light,  
 I'll out to the freezing mere,  
 And ease my heart with one little song,  
 For none will be nigh to hear.  
 And it's O my love, my love!  
 And it's O my dear, my dear!  
 It's of her that I'll sing till the wild  
 woods ring,  
 When nobody's nigh to hear.

My love is young, she is young, is  
 young ;  
 When she laughs the dimple dips.  
 We walked in the wind, and her long  
 locks blew  
 Till sweetly they touched my lips.  
 And I'll out to the freezing mere,  
 Where the stiff reeds whistle so low,  
 And I'll tell my mind to the friendly  
 wind,  
 Because I have loved her so.

Ay, and she's true, my lady is true!  
 And that's the best of it all ;  
 And when she blushes my heart so  
 yearns

That tears are ready to fall.  
 And it's O my love, my love!  
 And it's O my dear, my dear!  
 It's of her that I'll sing till the wild  
     woods ring,  
 When nobody's nigh to hear.

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### COLD AND QUIET.

COLD, my dear, — cold and quiet.  
 In their cups on yonder lea,  
 Cowslips fold the brown bee's diet;  
 So the moss enfoldeth thee.  
 "Plant me, plant me, O love, a lily  
     flower —  
 Plant at my head, I pray you, a  
     green tree;  
 And when our children sleep," she  
     sighed, "at the dusk hour,  
 And when the lily blossoms, O come  
     out to me!"

Lost, my dear? Lost! nay, deepest  
 Love is that which loseth least;  
 Through the night-time while thou  
     sleepest,  
 Still I watch the shrouded east.  
 Near thee, near thee, my wife that aye  
     liveth,  
 "Lost" is no word for such a love as  
     mine;  
 Love from her past to me a present  
     giveth,  
 And love itself doth comfort, making  
     pain divine.

Rest, my dear, rest. Fair showeth  
 That which was, and not in vain  
 Sacred have I kept, God knoweth,  
 Love's last words atween us  
     twain.  
 "Hold by our past, my only love, my  
     lover;  
 Fall not, but rise, O love, by loss of  
     me!"  
 Boughs from our garden, white with  
     bloom hang over.  
 Love, now the children slumber, I  
     come out to thee.

### A SNOW MOUNTAIN.

CAN I make white enough my thought  
     for thee,  
 Or wash my words in light? Thou  
     hast no mate  
 To sit aloft in the silence silently  
     And twin those matchless heights un-  
     desecrate.  
 Reverend as Lear, when, lorn of shel-  
     ter, he  
 Stood, with his old white head, sur-  
     prised at fate;  
 Alone as Galileo, when, set free,  
     Before the stars he mused disconso-  
     late.  
 Ay, and remote, as the dead lords of  
     song,  
 Great masters who have made us  
     what we are,  
 For thou and they have taught us how  
     to long  
 And feel a sacred want of the fair and  
     far:  
 Reign, and keep life in this our deep  
     desire —  
 Our only greatness is that we aspire.

---

### SLEEP.

(A WOMAN SPEAKS.)

O SLEEP, we are beholden to thee,  
     sleep,  
 Thou bearest angels to us in the  
     night,  
 Saints out of heaven with palms.  
     Seen by thy light  
 Sorrow is some old tale that goeth  
     not deep;  
 Love is a pouting child. Once I did  
     sweep  
 Through space with thee, and lo,  
     a dazzling sight —  
 Stars! They came on, I felt their  
     drawing and might;  
 And some had dark companions. Once  
     (I weep  
 When I remember that) we sailed the  
     tide,  
 And found fair isles, where no isles  
     used to bide,

And met there my lost love, who said  
to me,  
*That 'twas a long mistake : he had not  
died.*

Sleep, in the world to come how  
strange 'twill be  
Never to want, never to wish for  
thee!

PROMISING.

(A MAN SPEAKS.)

ONCE, a new world, the sun-swart mar-  
inere,  
Columbus, promised, and was sore  
withstood,  
Ungraced, unhelped, unheard for many  
a year;  
But let at last to make his promise  
good.  
Promised and promising I go, most  
dear,  
To better my dull heart with love's  
sweet feud,  
My life with its most reverent hope  
and fear,  
And my religion, with fair gratitude.  
O we must part; the stars for me con-  
tend,  
And all the winds that blow on all  
the seas.  
Through wonderful waste places I must  
wend,  
And with a promise my sad soul ap-  
pease.

Promise then, promise much of far-off  
bliss;  
But — ah, for present joy, give me one  
kiss.

LOVE.

Who veileth love should first have van-  
quished fate.  
She folded up the dream in her deep  
heart,  
Her fair full lips were silent on that  
smart,  
Thick fringed eyes did on the grasses  
wait.  
What good? one eloquent blush, but  
one, and straight  
The meaning of a life was known;  
for art  
Is often foiled in playing nature's  
part,  
And time holds nothing long invio-  
late.  
Earth's buried seed springs up —  
slowly, or fast:  
The ring came home, that one in ages  
past  
Flung to the keeping of unfathomed  
seas:  
And golden apples on the mystic  
trees  
Were sought and found, and borne  
away at last,  
Though watched of the divine Hes-  
perides.

## POEMS

*Written on the Deaths of Three Lovely Children who were taken from their  
Parents within a month of one another.*

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HENRY,

AGED EIGHT YEARS.

YELLOW leaves, how fast they flutter — woodland hollows thickly strewing,  
Where the wan October sunbeams scantily in the mid-day win,  
While the dim gray clouds are drifting, and in saddened hues imbuing  
All without and all within!

All within! but winds of autumn, little Henry, round their dwelling  
Did not load your father's spirit with those deep and burdened sighs; —  
Only echoed thoughts of sadness, in your mother's bosom swelling,  
Fast as tears that dim her eyes.

Life is fraught with many changes, checked with sorrow and mutation,  
But no grief it ever lightened such a truth before to know: —  
I behold them — father, mother — as they seemed to contemplation,  
Only three short weeks ago!

Saddened for the morrow's parting — up the stairs at midnight stealing —  
As with cautious foot we glided past the children's open door, —  
"Come in here," they said, the lamplight dimpled forms at last revealing,  
"Kiss them in their sleep once more."

You were sleeping, little Henry, with your eyelids scarcely closing,  
Two sweet faces near together, with their rounded arms entwined: —  
And the rose-bud lips were moving, as if stirred in their reposing  
By the movements of the mind!

And your mother smoothed the pillow, and her sleeping treasures numbered,  
Whispering fondly — "He is dreaming" — as you turned upon your bed —  
And your father stooped to kiss you, happy dreamer, as you slumbered,  
With his hand upon your head!

Did he know the true deep meaning of his blessing? No! he never  
Heard afar the summons uttered — "Come up hither" — Never knew  
How the awful Angel faces kept his sleeping boy for ever,  
And for ever in their view.

Awful Faces, unimpassioned, silent Presences were by us,  
Shrouding wings — majestic beings — hidden by this earthly veil —  
Such as we have called on, saying, "Praise the Lord, O Ananias,  
Azarias, and Misael!"

But we saw not, and who knoweth, what the missioned Spirits taught him,  
To that one small bed drawn nearer, when we left him to their will?  
While he slumbered, who can answer for what dreams they may have brought him,  
When at midnight all was still?

Father! Mother! must you leave him on his bed, but not to slumber?  
Are the small hands meekly folded on his breast, but not to pray?  
When you count your children over, must you tell a different number,  
Since that happier yesterday?

Father! Mother! weep if need be, since this is a "time" for weeping,  
Comfort comes not for the calling, grief is never argued down —  
Coldly sounds the admonition, "Why lament? in better keeping  
Rests the child than in your own."

"Truth indeed! but, oh! compassion! Have you sought to scan my sorrow?"  
(Mother, you shall meekly ponder, list'ning to that common tale)  
"Does your heart repeat its echo, or by fellow-feeling borrow  
Even a tone that might avail?"

"Might avail to steal it from me, by its deep heart-warm affection?  
Might perceive by strength of loving how the fond words to combine?  
Surely no! I will be silent, in your soul is no reflection  
Of the care that burdens mine!"

When the winter twilight gathers, Father, and your thoughts shall wander,  
Sitting lonely you shall blend him with your listless reveries,  
Half forgetful what division holds the form whereon you ponder  
From its place upon your knees —

With a start of recollection, with a half-reproachful wonder,  
Of itself the heart shall question, "Art Thou then no longer here?  
Is it so, my little Henry? Are we set so far asunder  
Who were wont to be so near?"

While the fire-light dimly flickers, and the lengthened shades are meeting,  
To itself the heart shall answer, "He shall come to me no more:  
I shall never hear his footsteps nor the child's sweet voice entreating  
For admission at my door."

But upon *your* fair, fair forehead, no regrets nor griefs are dwelling,  
Neither sorrow nor disquiet do the peaceful features know;  
Nor that look, whose wistful beauty seemed their sad hearts to be telling,  
"Daylight breaketh, let me go!"

Daylight breaketh, little Henry ; in its beams your soul awaketh —  
 What though night should close around us, dim and dreary to the view —  
 Though *our* souls should walk in darkness, far away that morning breaketh  
 Into endless day for you!

---

SAMUEL,

AGED NINE YEARS.

THEY have left you, little Henry, but they have not left you lonely —  
 Brothers' hearts so knit together could not, might not separate dwell,  
 Fain to seek you in the mansions far away — One lingered only  
 To bid those behind farewell!

Gentle Boy! — His childlike nature in most guileless form was moulded,  
 And it may be that his spirit woke in glory unaware,  
 Since so calmly he resigned it, with his hands still meekly folded,  
 Having said his evening prayer.

Or — if conscious of that summons — “Speak, O Lord, Thy servant heareth” —  
 As one said, whose name they gave him, might his willing answer be,  
 “Here am I” — like him replying — “At Thy gates my soul appeareth,  
 For behold Thou calledst me!”

A deep silence — utter silence, on his earthly home descendeth : —  
 Reading, playing, sleeping, waking — he is gone, and few remain!  
 “O the loss!” — they utter, weeping — every voice its echo lendeth —  
 “O the loss!” — But, O the gain!

On that tranquil shore his spirit was vouchsafed an early landing,  
 Lest the toils of crime should stain it, or the thrall of guilt control —  
 Lest that “wickedness should alter the yet simple understanding,  
 Or deceit beguile his soul!”

“Lay not up on earth thy treasure” — they have read that sentence duly,  
 Moth and rust shall fret thy riches — earthly good hath swift decay —  
 “Even so,” each heart replieth — “As for me, my riches truly  
 Make them wings and flee away!”

“O my riches! — O my children! — dearest part of life and being,  
 Treasures looked to for the solace of this life's declining years, —  
 Were our voices cold to hearing — or our faces cold to seeing,  
 That ye left us to our tears?”

“We inherit conscious silence, ceasing of some merry laughter,  
 And the hush of two sweet voices — (healing sounds for spirits bruised!)  
 Of the tread of joyous footsteps in the pathway following after,  
 Of two names no longer used!”



Question for them, little Sister, in your sweet and childish fashion —  
Search and seek them, Baby Brother, with your calm and asking eyes —  
Dimpled lips that fail to utter fond appeal or sad compassion,  
Mild regret or dim surprise!

There are two tall trees above you, by the high east window growing,  
Underneath them, slumber sweetly, lapt in silence deep, serene;  
Save, when pealing in the distance, organ notes towards you flowing  
Echo — with a pause between!

And that pause? — a voice shall fill it — tones that blessed you daily, nightly,  
Well beloved, but not sufficing, Sleepers, to awake you now,  
Though so near he stand, that shadows from your trees may tremble lightly  
On his book and on his brow!

Sleep then ever! Neither singing of sweet birds shall break your slumber,  
Neither fall of dew, nor sunshine, dance of leaves, nor drift of snow,  
Charm those dropt lids more to open, nor the tranquil bosoms cumber  
With one care for things below!

It is something, the assurance, that *you* ne'er shall feel like sorrow,  
Weep no past and dread no future — know not sighing, feel not pain —  
Nor a day that looketh forward to a mournfuller to-morrow —  
“Clouds returning after rain!”

No, far off, the daylight breaketh, in its beams each soul awaketh:  
“What though clouds,” they sigh, “be gathered dark and stormy to the view,  
Though the light our eyes forsaketh, fresh and sweet behold it breaketh  
Into endless day for you!”

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### KATIE, AGED FIVE YEARS.

(ASLEEP IN THE DAYTIME.)

ALL rough winds are hushed and silent, golden light the meadow steepeth,  
And the last October roses daily wax more pale and fair;  
They have laid a gathered blossom on the breast of one who sleepeth  
With a sunbeam on her hair.

Calm, and draped in snowy raiment she lies still, as one that dreameth,  
And a grave sweet smile hath parted dimpled lips that may not speak;  
Slanting down that narrow sunbeam like a ray of glory gleameth  
On the sainted brow and cheek.

There is silence! They who watch her, speak no word of grief or wailing,  
In a strange unwonted calmness they gaze on and cannot cease,  
Though the pulse of life beat faintly, thought shrink back, and hope be failing,  
They, like Aaron, “hold their peace.”

While they gaze on her, the deep bell with its long slow pauses soundeth ;  
Long they hearken — father — mother — love has nothing more to say :  
Beating time to feet of Angels leading her where love aboundeth  
Tolls the heavy bell this day.

Still in silence to its tolling they count over all her meetness  
To lie near their hearts and soothe them in all sorrows and all fears ;  
Her short life lies spread before them, but they cannot tell her sweetness,  
Easily as tell her years.

Only daughter — Ah ! how fondly Thought around that lost name lingers,  
Oft when lone your mother sitteth, she shall weep and droop her head,  
She shall mourn her baby-sempstress, with those imitative fingers,  
Drawing out her aimless thread.

In your father's Future cometh many a sad uncheered to-morrow,  
But in sleep shall three fair faces heavenly-calm towards him lean —  
Like a threefold cord shall draw him through the weariness of sorrow,  
Nearer to the things unseen.

With the closing of your eyelids close the dreams of expectation,  
And so ends the fairest chapter in the records of their way :  
Therefore — O thou God most holy — God of rest and consolation,  
Be Thou near to them this day !

Be Thou near, when they shall nightly, by the bed of infant brothers,  
Hear their soft and gentle breathing, and shall bless them on their knees ;  
And shall think how coldly falleth the white moonlight on the others,  
In their bed beneath the trees.

Be Thou near, when they, they *only*, bear those faces in remembrance,  
And the number of their children strangers ask them with a smile ;  
And when other childlike faces touch them by the strong resemblance  
To those turned to them erewhile.

Be Thou near, each chastened Spirit for its course and conflict nerving,  
Let Thy voice say, " Father — mother — lo ! thy treasures live above !  
Now be strong, be strong, no longer cumbered over much with serving  
At the shrine of human love."

Let them sleep ! In course of ages e'en the Holy House shall crumble,  
And the broad and stately steeple one day bend to its decline,  
And high arches, ancient arches bowed and decked in clothing humble,  
Creeping moss shall round them twine.

Ancient arches, old and hoary, sunny beams shall glimmer through them,  
And invest them with a beauty we would fain they should not share,  
And the moonlight slanting down them, the white moonlight shall imbue them  
With a sadness dim and fair.

Then the soft green moss shall wrap you, and the world shall all forget you,  
 Life, and stir, and toil, and tumult unawares shall pass you by;  
 Generations come and vanish: but it shall not grieve nor fret you,  
 That they sin, or that they sigh.

And the world, grown old in sinning, shall deny her first beginning,  
 And think scorn of words which whisper how that all must pass away;  
 Time's arrest and intermission shall account a vain tradition,  
 And a dream, the reckoning day!

Till His blast, a blast of terror, shall awake in shame and sadness  
 Faithless millions to a vision of the failing earth and skies,  
 And more sweet than song of Angels, in their shout of joy and gladness,  
 Call the dead in Christ to rise!

Then, by One Man's intercession, standing clear from their transgression,  
 Father — mother — you shall meet them fairer than they were before,  
 And have joy with the Redeemed, joy ear hath not heard — heart dreamed,  
 Ay for ever — evermore!

## THE TWO MARGARETS.

### I.

#### MARGARET BY THE MERE SIDE.

LYING imbedded in the green cham-  
 paign  
 That gives no shadow to thy silvery  
 face,  
 Open to all the heavens, and all their  
 train,  
 The marshalled clouds that cross with  
 stately pace,  
 No steadfast hills on thee reflected rest,  
 Nor waver with the dimpling of thy  
 breast.

O, silent Mere! about whose margins  
 spring  
 Thick bulrushes to hide the reed-  
 bird's nest;  
 Where the shy ousel dips her glossy  
 wing, [rest:  
 And balanced in the water takes her  
 While under bending leaves, all gem-  
 arrayed,  
 Blue dragon-flies sit panting in the  
 shade:

Warm, stilly place, the sundew loves  
 thee well,  
 And the green sward comes creeping  
 to thy brink,  
 And golden saxifrage and pimpernel  
 Lean down to thee their perfumed  
 heads to drink;  
 And heavy with the weight of bees doth  
 bend  
 White clover, and beneath thy wave  
 descend:

While the sweet scent of bean-fields,  
 floated wide  
 On a long eddy of the lightsome air  
 Over the level mead to thy lone side,  
 Doth lose itself among thy zephyrs  
 rare,  
 With wafts from hawthorn bowers and  
 new-cut hay,  
 And blooming orchards lying far away.

Thou hast thy Sabbaths, when a deeper  
 calm  
 Descends upon thee, quiet Mere, and  
 then  
 There is a sound of bells, a far-off  
 psalm  
 From gray church towers, that swims  
 across the fen;

And the light sigh where grass and  
waters meet,  
Is thy meek welcome to the visit sweet.

Thou hast thy lovers. Though the  
angler's rod  
Dimple thy surface seldom; though  
the oar  
Fill not with silvery globes thy fringing  
sod,

Nor send long ripples to thy lonely  
shore;  
Though few, as in a glass, have cared  
to trace  
The smile of nature moving on thy face;

Thou hast thy lovers truly. 'Mid the  
cold  
Of northern tarns the wild-fowl dream  
of thee,  
And, keeping thee in mind, their wings  
unfold,

And shape their course, high soaring,  
till they see  
Down in the world, like molten silver,  
rest  
Their goal, and screaming plunge them  
in thy breast.

Fair Margaret, who sittest all day  
long  
On the gray stone beneath the sycamore,

The bowing tree with branches lithe  
and strong,

The only one to grace the level shore,  
Why dost thou wait? for whom with  
patient cheer  
Gaze yet so wistfully adown the Mere?

Thou canst not tell, thou dost not know,  
alas!

Long watchings leave behind them  
little trace;

And yet how sweetly must the mornings  
pass,

That bring that dreamy calmness to  
thy face!

How quickly must the evenings come  
that find

Thee still regret to leave the Mere behind!

Thy cheek is resting on thy hand; thine  
eyes

Are like twin violets but half unclosed,  
And quiet as the deeps in yonder skies.

Never more peacefully in love reposed  
A mother's gaze upon her offspring  
dear,

Than thine upon the long far-stretching  
Mere.

Sweet innocent! Thy yellow hair floats  
low

In rippling undulations on thy breast,  
Then stealing down the parted love-  
locks flow,

Bathed in a sunbeam on thy knees to  
rest,

And touch those idle hands that folded  
lie,

Having from sport and toil a like im-  
munity.

Through thy life's dream with what a  
touching grace

Childhood attends thee, nearly woman  
grown;

Her dimples linger yet upon thy face,  
Like dew upon a lily this day blown;

Thy sighs are born of peace, unruffled,  
deep;

So the babe sighs on mother's breast  
asleep.

It sighs, and wakes, — but thou! thy  
dream is all,

And thou wert born for it, and it for  
thee;

Morn doth not take thy heart, nor even-  
fall

Charm out its sorrowful fidelity,  
Nor noon beguile thee from the pas-  
toral shore,

And thy long watch beneath the sycamore.

No, down the Mere, as far as eye can  
see,

Where its long reaches fade into the  
sky,

Thy constant gaze, fair child, rests  
lovingly;

But neither thou nor any can descry

Aught but the grassy banks, the rustling  
sedge,  
And flocks of wild-fowl splashing at  
their edge.

And yet 'tis not with expectation  
hushed

That thy mute rosy mouth doth pout-  
ing close:  
No fluttering hope to thy young heart  
e'er rushed.

Nor disappointment troubled its re-  
pose;  
All satisfied with gazing evermore  
Along the sunny Mere and reedy shore.

The brooding wren flies pertly near thy  
seat,

Thou wilt not move to mark her  
glancing wing;  
The timid sheep browse close before thy  
feet,

And heedless at thy side do thrushes  
sing.  
So long amongst them thou hast spent  
thy days,  
They know that harmless hand thou  
wilt not raise.

Thou wilt not lift it up—not e'en to  
take

The foxglove bells that flourish in the  
shade,  
And put them in thy bosom; not to  
make

A posy of wild hyacinth inlaid  
Like bright mosaic in the mossy grass,  
With freckled orchis and pale sassa-  
fras.

Gaze on;—take in the voices of the  
Mere,

The break of shallow water at thy  
feet,  
Its splash among long reeds and grasses  
sere,

And its weird sobbing,—hollow music  
meet  
For ears like thine; listen and take thy  
fill,  
And dream on it by night, when all is  
still.

Full sixteen years have slowly passed  
away,

Young Margaret, since thy fond  
mother here

Came down, a six months' wife, one  
April day,

To see her husband's boat go down  
the Mere,

And track its course, till, lost in distance  
blue,

In mellow light it faded from her view.

It faded, and she never saw it more;—  
Nor any human eye;—oh, grief! oh,  
woe!

It faded,—and returned not to the  
shore;

But far above it still the waters flow—  
And none beheld it sink, and none could  
tell

Where coldly slept the form she loved  
so well!

But that sad day, unknowing of her  
fate,

She homeward turn'd her still reluc-  
tant feet;

And at her wheel she spun, till dark and  
late,

The evening fell;—the time when  
they should meet;—

Till the stars paled that at deep mid-  
night burned—

And morning dawned, and he was not  
returned.

And the bright sun came up,—she  
thought too soon,—

And shed his ruddy light along the  
Mere;

And day wore on too quickly, and at  
noon

She came and wept beside the waters  
clear.

“How could he be so late?”—and  
then hope fled;

And disappointment darkened into  
dread.

He NEVER came, and she with weepings  
sore

Peered in the water-flags unceasingly;

Through all the undulations of the shore,

Looking for that which most she feared to see.

And then she took home sorrow to her heart,

And brooded over its cold, cruel smart.

And after, desolate she sat alone

And mourned, refusing to be comforted,

On the gray stone, the moss-embroidered stone,

With the great sycamore above her head;

Till after many days a broken oar

Hard by her seat was drifted to the shore.

It came, — a token of his fate, — the whole,

The sum of her misfortune to reveal ;

As if sent up in pity to her soul,

The tidings of her widowhood to seal ;

And put away the pining hope forlorn,  
That made her grief more bitter to be borne.

And she was patient ; through the weary day

She toiled ; though none was there  
her work to bless,

And did not wear the sullen months  
away,

Nor call on death to end her wretchedness,

But lest the grief should overflow her breast,

She toiled as heretofore, and would not rest.

But, her work done, what time the evening star

Rose over the cool water, then she came

To the gray stone, and saw its light from far

Drop down the misty Mere white  
lengths of flame,

And wondered whether there might be  
the place

Where the soft ripple wandered o'er  
his face.

Unfortunate ! In solitude forlorn

She dwelt, and thought upon her husband's grave,

Till when the days grew short a child  
was born

To the dead father underneath the  
wave ;

And it brought back a remnant of delight,

A little sunshine to its mother's sight ;

A little wonder to her heart grown  
numb,

And a sweet yearning pitiful and  
keen :

She took it as from that poor father  
come,

Her and the misery to stand between ;

Her little maiden babe, who day by  
day

Sucked at her breast and charmed her  
woes away.

But years flew on ; the child was still  
the same,

Nor human language she had learned  
to speak ;

Her lips were mute, and seasons went  
and came,

And brought fresh beauty to her tender  
cheek ;

And all the day upon the sunny shore

She sat and mused beneath the sycamore.

Strange sympathy ! she watched and  
weariest not,

Haply unconscious what it was she  
sought ;

Her mother's tale she easily forgot,  
And if she listened no warm tears it  
brought ;

Though surely in the yearnings of her  
heart

The unknown voyager must have had  
his part.

Unknown to her ; like all she saw un-  
known,

All sights were fresh as when they  
first began,

All sounds were new ; each murmur  
and each tone

And cause and consequence she could  
not scan,  
Forgot that night brought darkness in  
its train,  
Nor reasoned that the day would come  
again.

There is a happiness in past regret ;  
And echoes of the harshest sound  
are sweet.  
The mother's soul was struck with  
grief, and yet,  
Repeated in her child, 'twas not un-  
meet  
That echo-like the grief a tone should  
take  
Painless, but ever pensive for her sake ;

For her dear sake, whose patient soul  
was linked  
By ties so many to the babe unborn ;  
Whose hope, by slow degrees become  
extinct,  
For evermore had left her child for-  
lorn,  
Yet left no consciousness of want or  
woe,  
Nor wonder vague that these things  
should be so.

Truly her joys were limited and few,  
But they sufficed a life to satisfy,  
That neither fret nor dim foreboding  
knew,  
But breathed the air in a great har-  
mony  
With its own place and part, and was at  
one  
With all it knew of earth and moon and  
sun.

For all of them were worked into the  
dream,  
The husky sighs of wheat-fields in it  
wrought ;  
All the land-miles belonged to it ; the  
stream  
That fed the Mere ran through it like  
a thought.  
It was a passion of peace, and loved to  
wait  
'Neath boughs with fair green light  
illuminate ;

To wait with her alone ; always alone :  
For any that drew near she heeded  
not,  
Wanting them little as the lily grown  
Apart from others in a shady plot,  
Wants fellow-lilies of like fair degree,  
In her still glen to bear her company.

Always alone : and yet, there was a  
child  
Who loved this child, and, from his  
turret towers,  
Across the lea would roam to where,  
inised  
And fenced in rapturous silence, went  
her hours,  
And, with slow footsteps drawn anear  
the place  
Where mute she sat, would ponder on  
her face,

And wonder at her with a childish awe,  
And come again to look, and yet  
again,  
Till the sweet rippling of the Mere  
would draw  
His longing to itself ; while in her  
train  
The water-hen, come forth, would bring  
her brood  
From slumbering in the rushy solitude ;

Or to their young would curlews call  
and clang  
Their homeless young that down the  
furrows creep ;  
Or the wind-hover in the blue would  
hang,  
Still as a rock set in the watery deep.  
Then from her presence he would break  
away,  
Unmarked, ungreeted yet, from day to  
day.

But older grown, the Mere he haunted  
yet,  
And a strange joy from its sweet wild-  
ness caught ;  
Whilst careless sat alone maid Marga-  
ret,  
And "shut the gates" of silence on  
her thought,

All through spring mornings gemmed  
 with melted rime,  
 All through hay-harvest and through  
 gleaming time.

O pleasure for itself that boyhood  
 makes,  
 O happiness to roam the sighing  
 shore,  
 Plough up with elfin craft the water-  
 flakes,  
 And track the nested rail with cau-  
 tious oar;  
 Then floating lie and look with wonder  
 new  
 Straight up in the great dome of light  
 and blue.

O pleasure! yet they took him from the  
 wold,  
 The reedy Mere, and all his pastime  
 there,  
 The place where he was born, and  
 would grow old  
 If God his life so many years should  
 spare;  
 From the loved haunts of childhood and  
 the plain  
 And pasture-lands of his own broad do-  
 main.

And he came down when wheat was in  
 the sheaf,  
 And with her fruit the apple-branch  
 bent low,  
 While yet in August glory hung the  
 leaf,  
 And flowerless aftermath began to  
 grow;  
 He came from his gray turrets to the  
 shore,  
 And sought the maid beneath the sycam-  
 ore.

He sought her, not because her tender  
 eyes  
 Would brighten at his coming, for he  
 knew  
 Full seldom any thought of him would  
 rise  
 In her fair breast when he had passed  
 from view;

But for his own love's sake, that unbe-  
 guiled  
 Drew him in spirit to the silent child.

For boyhood in its better hour is prone  
 To reverence what it hath not under-  
 stood;  
 And he had thought some heavenly  
 meaning shone  
 From her clear eyes, that made their  
 watchings good;  
 While a great peacefulness of shade  
 was shed  
 Like oil of consecration on her head.

A fishing wallet from his shoulder  
 slung,  
 With bounding foot he reached the  
 mossy place,  
 A little moment gently o'er her hung,  
 Put back her hair and looked upon  
 her face,  
 Then fain from that deep dream to wake  
 her yet,  
 He "Margaret!" low murmured,  
 "Margaret!"

"Look at me once before I leave the  
 land,  
 For I am going, — going, Margaret."  
 And then she sighed, and, lifting up  
 her hand,  
 Laid it along his young fresh cheek,  
 and set  
 Upon his face those blue twin-deeps,  
 her eyes,  
 And moved it back from her in troubled  
 wise,

Because he came between her and her  
 fate,  
 The Mere. She sighed again as one  
 oppressed;  
 The waters, shining clear, with deli-  
 cate  
 Reflections wavered on her blameless  
 breast;  
 And through the branches dropt, like  
 flickerings fair,  
 And played upon her hands and on her  
 hair.



And he, withdrawn a little space to see,  
 Murmured in tender ruth that was not pain,  
 "Farewell, I go; but sometimes think of me,  
 Maid Margaret;" and there came by again  
 A whispering in the reed-beds and the sway  
 Of waters: then he turned and went his way.

And wilt thou think on him now he is gone?  
 No; thou wilt gaze: though thy young eyes grow dim,  
 And thy soft cheek become all pale and wan,  
 Still thou wilt gaze, and spend no thought on him;  
 There is no sweetness in his laugh for thee —  
 No beauty in his fresh heart's gayety.

But wherefore linger in deserted haunts?  
 Why of the past, as if yet present, sing?  
 The yellow iris on the margin flaunts,  
 With hyacinth the banks are blue in spring,  
 And under dappled clouds the lark afloat  
 Pours all the April-tide from her sweet throat.

But Margaret—ah! thou art there no more,  
 And thick dank moss creeps over thy gray stone;  
 Thy path is lost that skirted the low shore,  
 With willow-grass and speedwell overgrown;  
 Thine eye has closed for ever, and thine ear  
 Drinks in no more the music of the Mere.

The boy shall come—shall come again in spring,  
 Well pleased that pastoral solitude to share,

And some kind offering in his hand will bring  
 To cast into thy lap, O maid most fair—  
 Some clasping gem about thy neck to rest,  
 Or heave and glimmer on thy guileless breast.

And he shall wonder why thou art not here  
 The solitude with "smiles to entertain,"  
 And gaze along the reaches of the Mere;  
 But he shall never see thy face again—  
 Shall never see upon the reedy shore  
 Maid Margaret beneath her sycamore.

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## II.

### MARGARET IN THE XEBEC.

[“Concerning this man (Robert Delacour), little further is known than that he served in the king's army, and was wounded in the battle of Marston Moor, being then about twenty-seven years of age. After the battle of Nazeby, finding himself a marked man, he quitted the country, taking with him the child whom he had adopted; and he made many voyages between the different ports of the Mediterranean and Levant.”]

RESTING within his tent at turn of day,  
 A wailing voice his scanty sleep beset:  
 He started up—it did not flee away—  
 'Twas no part of his dream, but still did fret  
 And pine into his heart, “Ah me! ah me!”  
 Broken with heaving sobs right mournfully.

Then he arose, and, troubled at this thing,  
 All wearily toward the voice he went  
 Over the down-trod bracken and the ling,

Until it brought him to a soldier's  
tent,  
Where, with the tears upon her face,  
he found  
A little maiden weeping on the ground ;

And backward in the tent an aged  
crone  
Upbraided her full harshly more and  
more,  
But sunk her chiding to an undertone  
When she beheld him standing at  
the door,  
And calmed her voice, and dropped  
her lifted hand,  
And answered him with accent soft and  
bland.

No, the young child was none of hers,  
she said,  
But she had found her where the ash  
lay white  
About a smouldering tent ; her infant  
head  
All shelterless, she through the dewy  
night  
Had slumbered on the field, — un-  
gentle fate  
For a lone child so soft and delicate.

“And I,” quoth she, “have tended  
her with care,  
And thought to be rewarded of her  
kin,  
For by her rich attire and features fair  
I know her birth is gentle : yet  
within  
The tent unclaimed she doth but pine  
and weep,  
A burden I would fain no longer keep.”

Still while she spoke the little creature  
wept,  
Till painful pity touched him for the  
flow  
Of all those tears, and to his heart  
there crept  
A yearning as of fatherhood, and lo !  
Reaching his arms to her, “My sweet,”  
quoth he,  
“Dear little madam, wilt thou come  
with me?”

Then she left off her crying, and a look  
Of wistful wonder stole into her eyes.  
The sullen frown her dimpled face for-  
sook,  
She let him take her, and forgot her  
sighs,  
Contented in his alien arms to rest,  
And lay her baby head upon his breast.

Ah, sure a stranger trust was never  
sought  
By any soldier on a battle-plain.  
He brought her to his tent, and soothed  
his voice,  
Rough with command ; and asked,  
but all in vain,  
Her story, while her prattling tongue  
rang sweet,  
She playing, as one at home, about his  
feet.

Of race, of country, or of parentage,  
Her lisping accents nothing could  
unfold ; —  
No questioning could win to read the  
page  
Of her short life ; — she left her tale  
untold,  
And home and kin thus early to for-  
get,  
She only knew, — her name was —  
Margaret.

Then in the dusk upon his arm it  
chanced  
That night that suddenly she fell  
asleep ;  
And he looked down on her like one  
entranced,  
And listened to her breathing still  
and deep,  
As if a little child, when daylight  
closed,  
With half-shut lids had ne'er before  
reposed.

Softly he laid her down from off his  
arm,  
With earnest care and new-born ten-  
derness :  
Her infancy, a wonder-working charm,  
Laid hold upon his love ; he stayed  
to bless .

The small sweet head, then went he  
forth that night  
And sought a nurse to tend this new  
delight.

And day by day his heart she wrought  
upon,  
And won her way into its inmost  
fold —  
A heart which, but for lack of that  
whereon  
To fix itself, would never have been  
cold;  
And, opening wide, now let her come to  
dwell  
Within its strong unguarded citadel.

She, like a dream, unlocked the hidden  
springs  
Of his past thoughts, and set their  
current free  
To talk with him of half-forgotten  
things —  
The pureness and the peace of in-  
fancy,  
“Thou also, thou,” to sigh, “wert un-  
defiled  
(O God, the change!) once, as this little  
child.”

The baby-mistress of a soldier's heart,  
She had but friendlessness to stand  
her friend,  
And her own orphanhood to plead her  
part,  
When he, a wayfarer, did pause, and  
bend,  
And bear with him the starry blossom  
sweet  
Out of its jeopardy from trampling feet.

A gleam of light upon a rainy day,  
A new-tied knot that must be severed  
soon,  
At sunrise once before his tent at  
play,  
And hurried from the battle-field at  
noon,  
While face to face in hostile ranks they  
stood,  
Who should have dwelt in peace and  
brotherhood.

But ere the fight, when higher rose the  
sun,  
And yet were distant far the rebel  
bands,  
She heard at intervals a booming gun,  
And she was pleased, and laughing  
clapped her hands;  
Till he came in with troubled look and  
tone,  
Who chose her desolate to be his own.

And he said, “Little madam, now fare-  
well,  
For there will be a battle fought ere  
night.  
God be thy shield, for He alone can tell  
Which way may fall the fortune of  
the fight.  
To fitter hands the care of thee pertain,  
My dear, if we two never meet again.”

Then he gave money shortly to her  
nurse,  
And charged her straitly to depart in  
haste,  
And leave the plain, whereon the deadly  
curse  
Of war should light with ruin, death,  
and waste,  
And all the ills that must its presence  
blight,  
E'en if proud victory should bless the  
right.

“But if the rebel cause should prosper,  
then  
It were not good among the hills to  
wend;  
But journey through to Boston in the  
fen,  
And wait for peace, if peace our God  
shall send;  
And if my life is spared, I will essay,”  
Quoth he, “to join you there as best I  
may.”

So then he kissed the child, and went  
his way;  
But many troubles rolled above his  
head;  
The sun arose on many an evil day,  
And cruel deeds were done, and tears  
were shed;

And hope was lost, and loyal hearts  
were fain  
In dust to hide, — ere they two met  
again.

So passed the little child from thought,  
from view —  
(The snowdrop blossoms, and then is  
not there,  
Forgotten till men welcome it anew),  
He found her in his heavy days of  
care,  
And with her dimples was again be-  
guiled,  
As on her nurse's knee she sat and  
smiled.

And he became a voyager by sea,  
And took the child to share his wan-  
dering state;  
Since from his native land compelled to  
flee,  
And hopeless to avert her monarch's  
fate;  
For all was lost that might have made  
him pause,  
And, past a soldier's help, the royal  
cause.

And thus rolled on long days, long  
months and years,  
And Margaret within the Xebec  
sailed;  
The lulling wind made music in her  
ears,  
And nothing to her life's complete-  
ness failed.  
Her pastime 'twas to see the dolphins  
spring,  
And wonderful live rainbows glimmer-  
ing.

The gay sea-plants familiar were to her,  
As daisies to the children of the land;  
Red wavy dulse the sunburnt mariner  
Raised from its bed to glisten in her  
hand;  
The vessel and the sea were her life's  
stage —  
Her house, her garden, and her hermit-  
age.

Also she had a cabin of her own,  
For beauty like an elfin palace  
bright,  
With Venice glass adorned and crystal  
stone,  
That trembled with a many-colored  
light;  
And there with two caged ringdoves  
she did play,  
And feed them carefully from day to  
day.

Her bed with silken curtains was en-  
closed,  
White as the snowy rose of Guelder-  
land;  
On Turkish pillows her young head  
reposed,  
And love had gathered with a careful  
hand  
Fair playthings to the little maiden's  
side,  
From distant ports, and cities parted  
wide.

She had two myrtle-plants that she did  
tend,  
And think all trees were like to them  
that grew:  
For things on land she did confuse and  
blend,  
And chiefly from the deck the land  
she knew,  
And in her heart she pitied more and  
more  
The steadfast dwellers on the change-  
less shore.

Green fields and inland meadows faded  
out  
Of mind, or with sea images were  
linked;  
And yet she had her childish thoughts  
about  
The country she had left — though  
indistinct  
And faint as mist the mountain-head  
that shrouds,  
Or dim through distance as Magellan's  
clouds.

And when to frame a forest scene she  
tried,  
The ever-present sea would yet in-  
trude,  
And all her towns were by the water's  
side,  
It murmured in all moorland soli-  
tude,  
Where rocks and the ribbed sand would  
intervene,  
And waves would edge her fancied vil-  
lage green ;

Because her heart was like an ocean  
shell,  
That holds (men say) a message from  
the deep ;  
And yet the land was strong, she knew  
its spell,  
And harbor lights could draw her in  
her sleep ;  
And minster chimes from piercèd tow-  
ers that swim,  
Were the land-angels making God a  
hymn.

So she grew on, the idol of one heart,  
And the delight of many — and her  
face,  
Thus dwelling chiefly from her sex  
apart,  
Was touched with a most deep and  
tender grace —  
A look that never aught but nature  
gave,  
Artless, yet thoughtful ; innocent, yet  
grave.

Strange her adornings were, and  
strangely blent :  
A golden net confined her nut-brown  
hair ;  
Quaint were the robes that divers lands  
had lent,  
And quaint her aged nurse's skill and  
care ;  
Yet did they well on the sea-maiden  
meet,  
Circle her neck, and grace her dimpled  
feet.

The sailor folk were glad because of  
her,  
And deemed good fortune followed  
in her wake ;  
She was their guardian saint, they did  
aver —  
Prosperous winds were sent them for  
her sake ;  
And strange rough vows, strange pray-  
ers, they nightly made,  
While, storm or calm, she slept, in  
nought afraid.

Clear were her eyes, that daughter of  
the sea,  
Sweet, when uplifted to her aged  
nurse,  
She sat, and communed what the world  
could be ;  
And rambling stories caused her to  
rehearse  
How Yule was kept, how maidens  
tossed the hay,  
And how bells rang upon a wedding  
day.

But they grew brighter when the even-  
ing-star  
First trembled over the still glowing  
wave,  
That bathed in ruddy light, mast, sail,  
and spar ;  
For then, reclined in rest that twi-  
light gave,  
With him who served for father, friend,  
and guide,  
She sat upon the deck at eventide.

Then turned towards the west, that on  
her hair  
And her young cheek shed down its  
tender glow,  
He taught her many things with ear-  
nest care  
That he thought fitting a young  
maid should know,  
Told of the good deeds of the worthy  
dead,  
And prayers devout, by faithful martyrs  
said.

And many psalms he caused her to repeat  
 And sing them, at his knees reclined  
 the while,  
 And spoke with her of all things good  
 and meet,  
 And told the story of her native  
 isle,  
 Till at the end he made her tears to  
 flow,  
 Rehearsing of his royal master's woe.

And of the stars he taught her, and  
 their names,  
 And how the chartless mariner they  
 guide;  
 Of quivering light that in the zenith  
 flames,  
 Of monsters in the deep sea caves  
 that hide;  
 Then changed the theme to fairy rec-  
 ords wild,  
 Enchanted moor, elf dame, or change-  
 ling child.

To her the Eastern lands their strange-  
 ness spread,  
 The dark-faced Arab in his long blue  
 gown,  
 The camel thrusting down a snake-like  
 head  
 To browse on thorns outside a walled  
 white town,  
 Where palmy clusters rank by rank up-  
 right  
 Float as in quivering lakes of ribbed  
 light.

And when the ship sat like a broad-  
 winged bird  
 Becalmed, lo, lions answered in the  
 night  
 Their fellows, all the hollow dark was  
 stirred  
 To echo on that tremulous thunder's  
 flight,  
 Dying in weird faint moans; — till, look!  
 the sun  
 And night, and all the things of night,  
 were done.

And they, toward the waste as morning  
 brake,  
 Turned, where, inslaid in his green  
 watered land,  
 The Lybian Zeus lay couched of old,  
 and spake,  
 Hemmed in with leagues of furrow-  
 faced sand —  
 Then saw the moon (like Joseph's  
 golden cup  
 Come back) behind some ruined roof  
 swim up.

But blooming childhood will not always  
 last,  
 And storms will rise e'en on the tide-  
 less sea;  
 His guardian love took fright, she grew  
 so fast,  
 And he began to think how sad 'twould  
 be  
 If he should die, and pirate hordes  
 should get  
 By sword or shipwreck his fair Mar-  
 garet.

It was a sudden thought; but he gave  
 way,  
 For it assailed him with unwonted  
 force;  
 And, with no more than one short  
 week's delay,  
 For English shores he shaped the  
 vessel's course;  
 And ten years absent saw her landed  
 now,  
 With thirteen summers on her maiden  
 brow.

And so he journeyed with her, far in-  
 land,  
 Down quiet lanes, by hedges gemmed  
 with dew,  
 Where wonders met her eye on every  
 hand,  
 And all was beautiful and strange and  
 new —  
 All, from the forest trees in stately  
 ranks,  
 To yellow cowslips trembling on the  
 banks.

All new — the long-drawn slope of evening shades

The sweet solemnities of waxing light,

The white-haired boys, the blushing rustic maids,

The ruddy gleam through cottage casements bright,

The green of pastures, bloom of garden nooks,

And endless bubbling of the water-brooks.

So far he took them on through this green land,

The maiden and her nurse, till journeying

They saw at last a peaceful city stand  
On a steep mount, and heard its clear bells ring.

High were the towers and rich with ancient state,

In its old wall enclosed and massive gate.

There dwelt a worthy matron whom he knew,

To whom in time of war he gave good aid,

Shielding her household from the plundering crew

When neither law could bind nor worth persuade:

And to her house he brought his care and pride,

Aweary with the way and sleepy-eyed.

And he, the man whom she was fain to serve,

Delayed not shortly his request to make,

Which was, if aught of her he did deserve,

To take the maid, and rear her for his sake,

To guard her youth, and let her breeding be

In womanly reserve and modesty.

And that same night into the house he brought

The costly fruits of all his voyages —

Rich Indian gems of wandering craftsmen wrought,

Long ropes of pearls from Persian palaces,

With ingots pure and coins of Venice mould,

And silver bars and bags of Spanish gold;

And costly merchandise of far-off lands,

And golden stuffs and shawls of Eastern dye,

He gave them over to the matron's hands,

With jewelled gauds, and toys of ivory,

To be her dower on whom his love was set, —

His dearest child, fair Madam Margaret.

Then he entreated, that if he should die,

She would not cease her guardian mission mild.

Awhile, as undecided, lingered nigh,  
Beside the pillow of the sleeping child,

Severed one wandering lock of wavy hair,

Took horse that night, and left her unaware.

And it was long before he came again —

So long that Margaret was woman grown;

And oft she wished for his return in vain,

Calling him softly in an undertone;

Repeating words that he had said the while,

And striving to recall his look and smile.

If she had known — oh, if she could have known —

The toils, the hardships of those absent years —

How bitter thralldom forced the unwilling groan —

How slavery wrung out subduing  
tears,  
Not calmly had she passed her hours  
away,  
Chiding half pettishly the long delay.

But she was spared. She knew no  
sense of harm,

While the red flames ascended from  
the deck ;

Saw not the pirate band the crew dis-  
arm,

Mourned not the floating spars, the  
smoking wreck.

She did not dream, and there was none  
to tell

That fetters bound the hands she loved  
so well.

Sweet Margaret — withdrawn from hu-  
man view ;

She spent long hours beneath the  
cedar shade,

The stately trees that in the garden  
grew,

And, overtwin'd, a towering shelter  
made ;

She mused among the flowers, and  
birds, and bees,

In winding walks, and bowering cano-  
pies ;

Or wandered slowly through the an-  
cient rooms,

Where oriel windows shed their rain-  
bow gleams ;

And tapestried hangings, wrought in  
Flemish looms,

Displayed the story of King Pha-  
raoh's dreams ;

And, come at noon because the well  
was deep,

Beautiful Rachel leading down her  
sheep.

At last she reached the bloom of  
womanhood,

After five summers spent in growing  
fair ;

Her face betokened all things dear and  
good,

The light of somewhat yet to come  
was there

Asleep, and waiting for the opening  
day,  
When childish thoughts, like flowers,  
would drift away.

O! we are far too happy while they  
last ;

We have our good things first, and  
they cost naught ;

Then the new splendor comes unfath-  
omed, vast,

A costly trouble, ay, a sumptuous  
thought,

And will not wait, and cannot be pos-  
sessed,

Though infinite yearnings fold it to the  
breast.

And time, that seemed so long, is  
fleeting by,

And life is more than life ; love more  
than love ;

We have not found the whole — and  
we must die —

And still the unclasped glory floats  
above.

The inmost and the utmost faint from  
sight,

For ever secret in their veil of light.

Be not too hasty in your flow, you  
rhymes,

For Margaret is in her garden bower ;  
Delay to ring, you soft cathedral

chimes,

And tell not out too soon the noon-  
tide hour :

For one draws nearer to your ancient  
town,

On the green mount down settled like  
a crown.

He journeyed on, and, as he neared the  
gate,

He met with one to whom he named  
the maid,

Inquiring of her welfare, and her state,  
And of the matron in whose house

she stayed.

"The maiden dwelt there yet," the  
townsman said ;

"But, for the ancient lady, — she was  
dead."



He further said, she was but little known,

Although reputed to be very fair,  
And little seen (so much she dwelt alone)

But with her nurse at stated morning prayer ;

So seldom passed her sheltering garden wall,

Or left the gate at quiet evening fall.

Flow softly, rhymes — his hand is on the door ;

Ring out, ye noonday bells, his welcoming —

“He went out rich, but he returneth poor ;”

And strong — now something bowed with suffering ;

And on his brow are traced long furrowed lines,

Earned in the fight with pirate Algerines.

Her aged nurse comes hobbling at his call ;

Lifts up her withered hand in dull surprise,

And, tottering, leads him through the pillared hall ;

“What! come at last to bless my lady’s eyes!

Dear heart, sweet heart, she’s grown a likesome maid —

Go, seek her where she sitteth in the shade.”

The noonday chime had ceased — she did not know

Who watched her, while her ringdoves fluttered near :

While, under the green boughs, in accents low

She sang unto herself. She did not hear

His footstep till she turned, then rose to meet

Her guest with guileless blush and wonder sweet.

But soon she knew him, came with quickened pace,

And put her gentle hands about his neck ;

And leaned her fair cheek to his sunburned face,

As long ago upon the vessel’s deck :  
As long ago she did in twilight deep,

When heaving waters lulled her infant sleep.

So then he kissed her, as men kiss their own,

And, proudly parting her unbraided hair,

He said : “I did not think to see thee grown

So fair a woman,” — but a touch of care

The deep-toned voice through its caressing kept,

And, hearing it, she turned away and wept.

Wept, — for an impress on the face she viewed —

The stamp of feelings she remembered not ;

His voice was calmer now, but more subdued,

Not like the voice long loved and un-forgot!

She felt strange sorrow and delightful pain —

Grief for the change, joy that he came again.

O pleasant days, that followed his return,

That made his captive years pass out of mind ;

If life had yet new pains for him to learn,

Not in the maid’s clear eyes he saw it shrined ;

And three full weeks he stayed with her, content

To find her beautiful and innocent.

It was all one in his contented sight

As though she were a child, till suddenly,

Waked of the chimes in the dead time of the night,

He fell to thinking how the urgency

Of Fate had dealt with him, and could  
 but sigh  
 For those best things wherein she  
 passed him by.

Down the long river of life how, cast  
 adrift,  
 She urged him on, still on, to sink or  
 swim;

And all at once, as if a veil did lift,  
 In the dead time of the night, and  
 bare to him

The want in his deep soul, he looked,  
 was dumb,  
 And knew himself, and knew his time  
 was come.

In the dead time of the night his soul  
 did sound

The dark sea of a trouble unforeseen,  
 For that one sweet that to his life was  
 bound

Had turned into a want—a misery  
 keen:

Was born, was grown, and wounded  
 sorely cried

All 'twixt the midnight and the morn-  
 ing tide.

He was a brave man, and he took this  
 thing

And cast it from him with a man's  
 strong hand;

And that next morn, with no sweet  
 altering

Of mien, beside the maid he took his  
 stand,

And copied his past self till ebbing day  
 Paled its deep western blush, and died  
 away.

And then he told her that he must de-  
 part

Upon the morrow, with the earliest  
 light;

And it displeased and pained her at the  
 heart,

And she went out to hide her from  
 his sight

Aneath the cedar trees, where dusk was  
 deep,

And be apart from him awhile to weep

And to lament, till, suddenly aware  
 Of steps, she started up as fain to  
 flee,

And met him in the moonlight pacing  
 there,

Who questioned with her why her  
 tears might be,

Till she did answer him, all red for  
 shame,

"Kind sir, I weep—the wanting of a  
 name."

"A name!" quoth he, and sighed. "I  
 never knew

Thy father's name; but many a stal-  
 wart youth

Would give thee his, dear child, and his  
 love too,

And count himself a happy man for-  
 sooth.

Is there none here who thy kind thought  
 hath won?"

But she did falter, and made answer,  
 "None."

Then, as in father-like and kindly  
 mood,

He said, "Dear daughter, it would  
 please me well

To see thee wed; for know it is not  
 good

That a fair woman thus alone should  
 dwell."

She said, "I am content it should be  
 so,

If when you journey I may with you  
 go."

This when he heard, he thought, right  
 sick at heart,

Must I withstand myself, and also  
 thee?

Thou, also thou! must nobly do thy  
 part;

That honor leads thee on which holds  
 back me.

No, thou sweet woman; by love's great  
 increase,

I will reject thee for thy truer peace.

Then said he, "Lady! — look upon my face;

Consider well this scar upon my brow;

I have had all misfortune but disgrace;  
I do not look for marriage blessings now.

Be not thy gratitude deceived. I know  
Thou think'st it is thy duty — I will go!

"I read thy meaning, and I go from hence,

Skilled in the reason; though my heart be rude,

I will not wrong thy gentle innocence,  
Nor take advantage of thy gratitude,  
But think, while yet the light these eyes  
shall bless,

The more for thee — of woman's nobleness."

Faultless and fair, all in the moony light,

As one ashamed, she looked upon the ground,

And her white raiment glistened in his sight.

And, hark! the vesper chimes began to sound,

Then lower yet she drooped her young, pure cheek,

And still was she ashamed, and could not speak.

A swarm of bells from that old tower o'erhead,

They sent their message sifting through the boughs

Of cedars; when they ceased his lady said,

"Pray you forgive me," and her lovely brows

She lifted, standing in her moonlit place,

And one short moment looked him in the face.

Then straight he cried, "O sweetheart, think all one

As no word yet were said between us twain,

And know thou that in this I yield to none —

I love thee, sweetheart, love thee!"  
so full fain,

While she did leave to silence all her part,

He took the gleaming whiteness to his heart —

The white-robed maiden with the warm white throat,

The sweet white brow, and locks of umber flow,

Whose murmuring voice was soft as rock-dove's note,

Entreating him, and saying, "Do not go!"

"I will not, sweetheart; nay, not now," quoth he,

"By faith and troth, I think thou art for me!"

And so she won a name that eventide,  
Which he gave gladly, but would

ne'er bespeak,

And she became the rough sea-captain's bride,

Matching her dimples to his sunburnt cheek;

And chasing from his voice the touch of care,

That made her weep when first she heard it there.

One year there was, fulfilled of happiness,

But O! it went so fast, too fast away.

Then came that trouble which full oft doth bless —

It was the evening of a sultry day,  
There was no wind the thread-hung

flowers to stir,

Or float abroad the filmy gossamer.

Toward the trees his steps the mariner bent,

Pacing the grassy walks with restless feet:

And he recalled, and pondered as he went,

All her most duteous love and converse sweet,

Till summer darkness settled deep and dim,  
And dew from bending leaves dropt down on him.

The flowers sent forth their nightly odors faint—

Thick leaves shut out the starlight overhead;

While he told over, as by strong constraint

Drawn on, her childish life on ship-board led,

And beauteous youth, since first low kneeling there,

With folded hands she lisped her evening prayer.

Then he remembered how, beneath the shade,

She wooed him to her with her lovely words,

While flowers were closing, leaves in moonlight played,

And in dark nooks withdrew the silent birds.

So pondered he that night in twilight dim,

While dew from bending leaves dropt down on him.

The flowers sent forth their nightly odors faint—

When, in the darkness waiting, he saw one

To whom he said—“How fareth my sweet saint?”

Who answered—“She hath borne to you a son;”

Then, turning, left him,—and the father said,

“God rain down blessings on his welcome head!”

But, Margaret!—*she* never saw the child,

Nor heard about her bed love's mournful wails;

But to the last, with ocean dreams beguiled,

Murmured of troubled seas and swelling sails—

Of weary voyages, and rocks unseen,  
And distant hills in sight, all calm and green. . . .

Woe and alas!—the times of sorrow come,

And make us doubt if we were ever glad!

So utterly that inner voice is dumb,  
Whose music through our happy days we had!

So, at the touch of grief, without our will,

The sweet voice drops from us, and all is still.

Woe and alas! for the sea-captain's wife—

That Margaret who in the Xebec played—

She spent upon his knee her baby life;

Her slumbering head upon his breast she laid.

How shall he learn alone his years to pass?

How in the empty house?—woe and alas!

She died, and in the aisle, the minster aisle,

They made her grave; and there, with fond intent,

Her husband raised, his sorrow to beguile,

A very fair and stately monument:

Her tomb (the careless vergers show it yet),

The mariner's wife, his love, his Margaret.

A woman's figure, with the eyelids closed,

The quiet head declined in slumber sweet;

Upon an anchor one fair hand reposed,

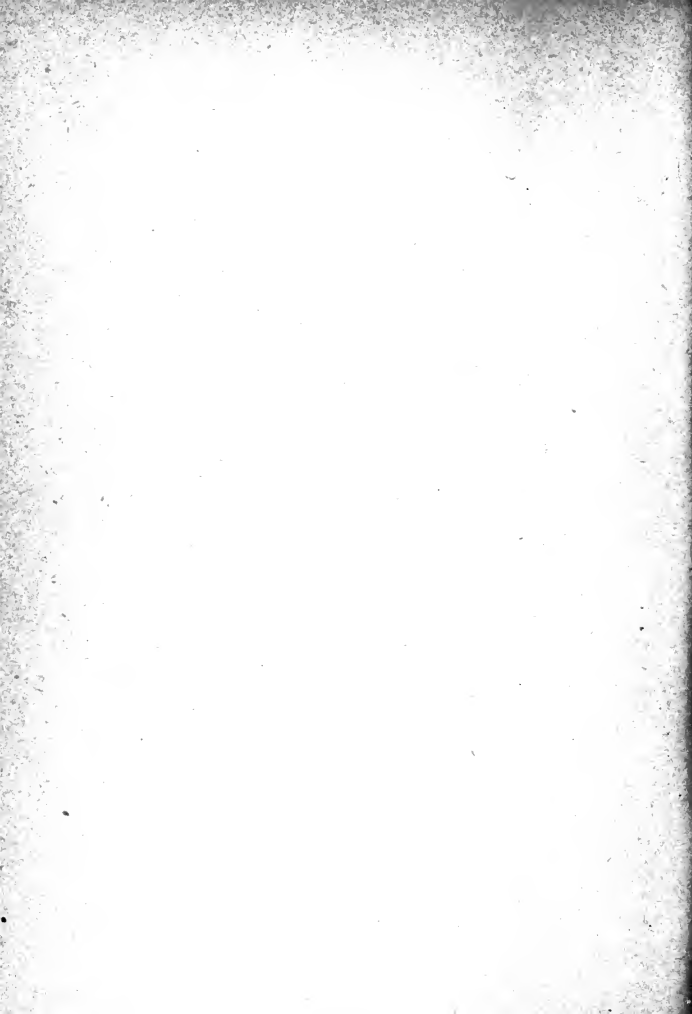
And a long ensign folded at her feet,

And carved upon the bordering of her vest

The motto of her house—“*We giveth rest.*”

There is an ancient window richly  
  fraught  
  And fretted with all hues most rich,  
  most bright,  
And in its upper tracery enwrought  
  An olive-branch and dove wide-  
  winged and white,  
An emblem meet for her, the tender  
  dove,  
Her heavenly peace, her duteous earthly  
  love.

Amid heraldic shields and banners  
  set,  
  In twisted knots and wildly-tangled  
  bands,  
Crimson and green, and gold and violet,  
  Fall softly on the snowy sculptured  
  hands ;  
And, when the sunshine comes, full  
  sweetly rest  
The dove and olive-branch upon her  
  breast.



## NOTES.

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### "THE DREAMS THAT CAME TRUE."

*Page 97.*

THIS story I first wrote in prose, and it was published some years ago.

### "A STORY OF DOOM."

*Page 136.*

The name of the patriarch's wife is intended to be pronounced Nigh-loi-ya.

Of the three sons of Noah — Shem, Ham, and Japhet — I have called Japhet the youngest (because he is always named last), and have supposed that, in the genealogies where he is called "Japhet the elder," he may have received the epithet because by that time there were younger Japhets.

*Page 168.*

The quivering butterflies in companies,  
That slowly crept adown the sandy marge,  
Like *living crocus beds*.

This beautiful comparison is taken from "The Naturalist on the River Amazons." "Vast numbers of orange-colored butterflies congregated on the moist sands. They assembled in densely-packed masses, sometimes two or three yards in circumference, their wings all held in an upright position, so that the sands looked as though variegated with *beds of crocuses*."

## "GLADYS AND HER ISLAND."

*Page 189.*

The woman is Imagination ; she is brooding over what she brought forth.

The two purple peaks represent the domains of Poetry and of History.

The girl is Fancy.

## "WINSTANLEY."

*Page 210.*

This ballad was intended to be one of a set, and was read to the children in the National Schools at Sherborne, Dorsetshire, in order to discover whether, if the actions of a hero were simply and plainly narrated, English children would like to learn the verses recording them by heart, as their forefathers did.









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